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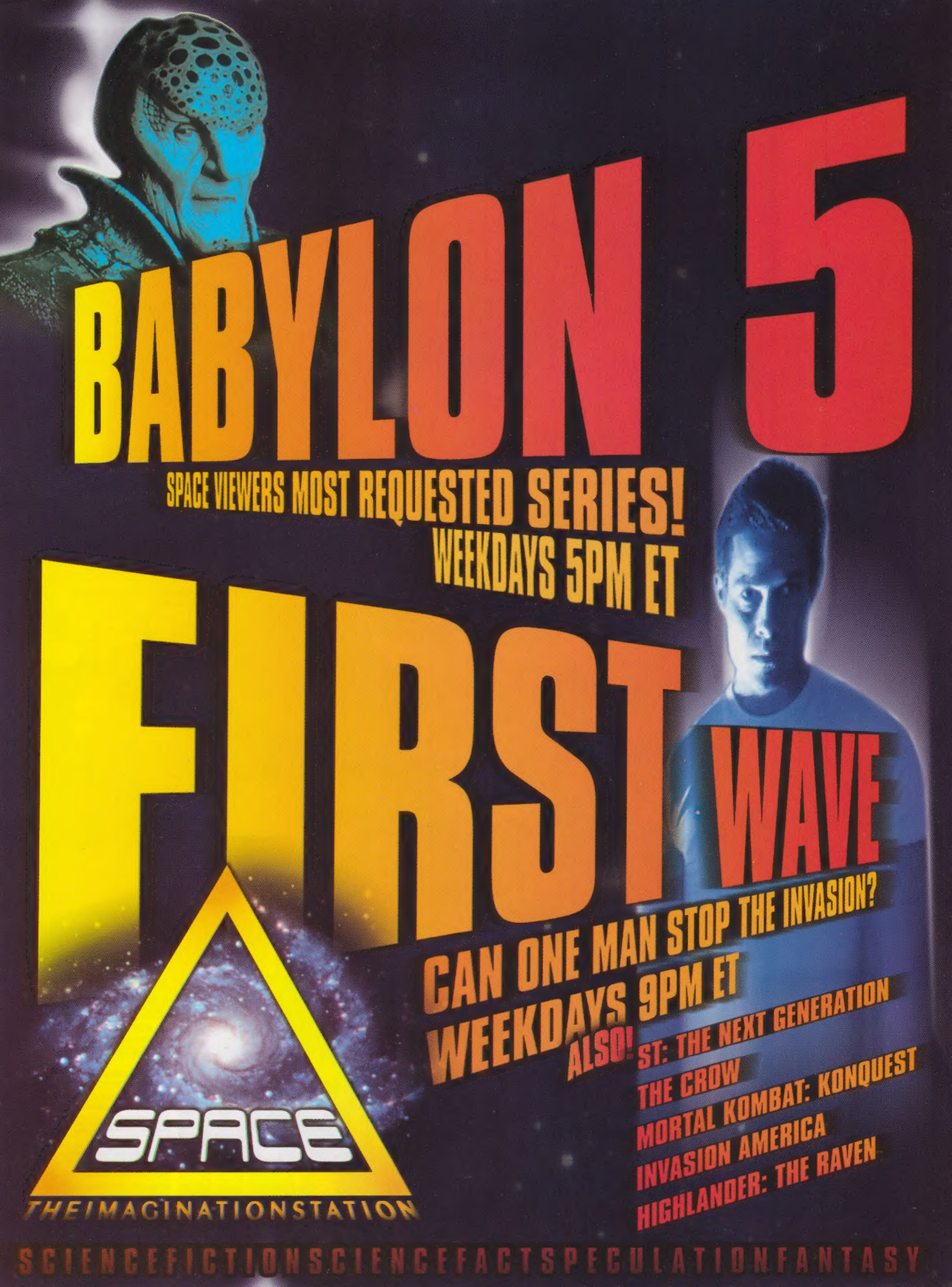
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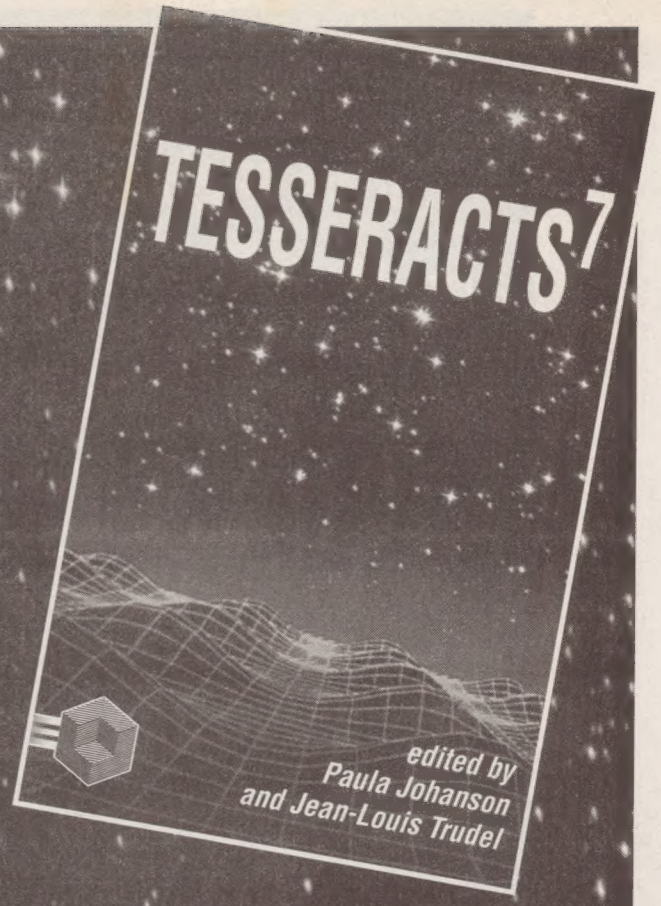

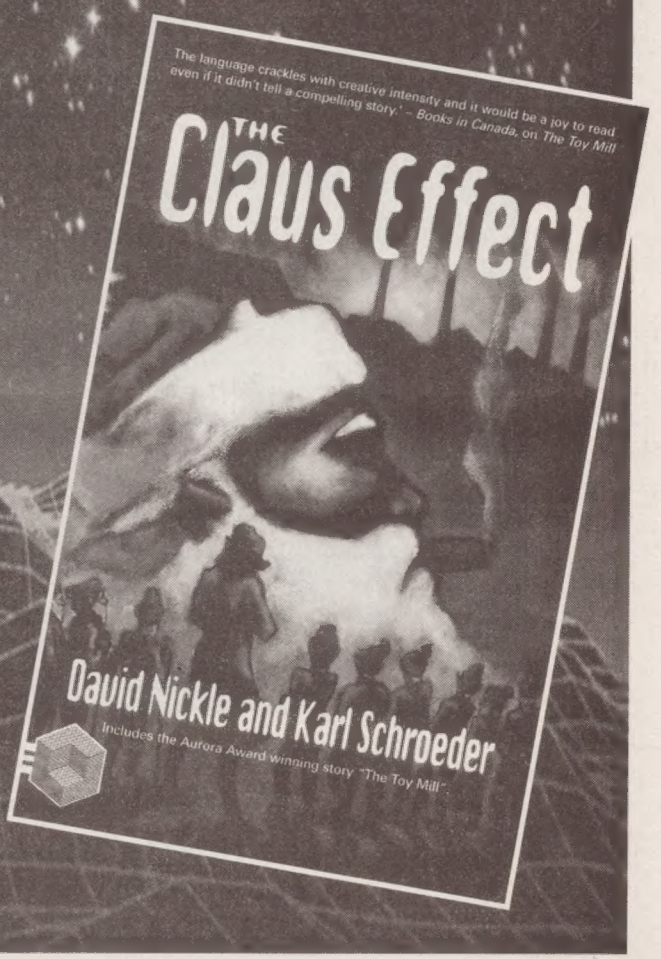
The language crackles with creative intensity and it would be a joy to read even if it didn't tell a compelling story.' – Books in Canada, on The Toy Mill
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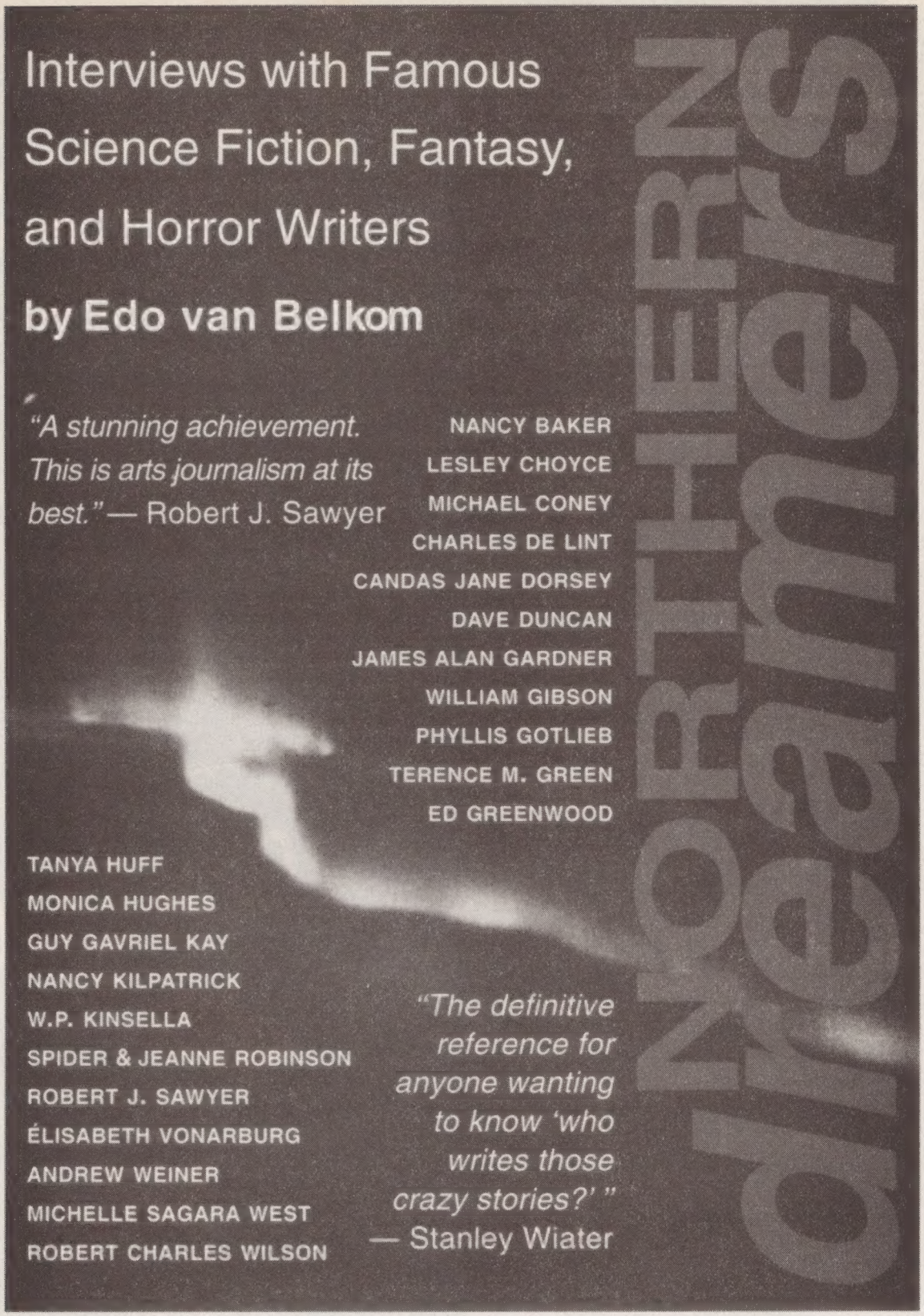

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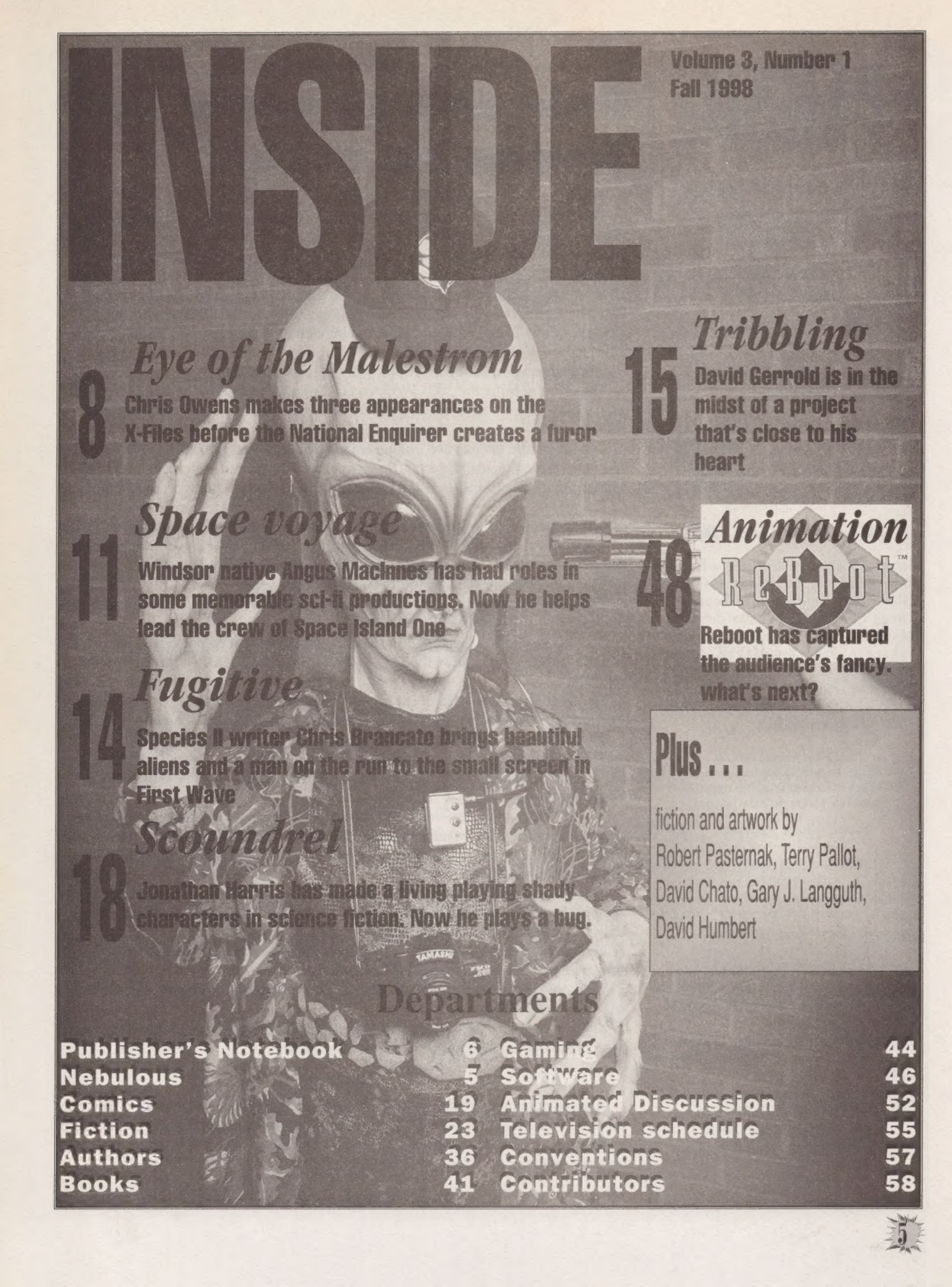

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Publisher's Notebook

Rule change could put Torcon bid at risk

Worldcons are the Grey Cup for science fiction and fantasy fans.

They happen once a year at various locations across the globe and attract thousands of fans. They are also the site of the Hugo Awards — one of which went to Canadian John Clute and co-editor John Grant for their Encyclopedia of Fantasy.

Winning the rights to host a Worldcon bid require a massive amount of time and effort on the part of volunteer groups. It also requires a campaign that would make a Parliament Hill lobbyist barf just contemplating the scope and the intricacies (and hassle) of establishing a support base and publicity machine that are essential if the bid is to have a chance of success.

It is also an undertaking that takes years to reach fruition.

The effort to bring the 2003 Worldcon to Toronto has been under way since last year. And a vote on the Worldcon site for that year won't be taken until the year 2000.

In a little more than a year, volunteers have been raising the bid's profile at conventions across Canada. Thus far, these volunteers have sold more than 1,000 pre-supporting memberships (at $20.03 a piece) to help finance the effort to win the bid.

But there is some concern that the effort will become much more difficult if a proposed change to the process is approved at next year's Worldcon in Australia.

Under the proposal, the zoned-bidding process that is applied to North America would be abandoned. The changes would mean that Worldcons could not be held in cities within 500 miles of each other on consecutive years.

The change would also allow unsuccessful bids to be shunted to the next year — provided they are outside the exclusion area.

The argument for this method of selection would be that no one could campaign more than three years before the vote — after all, bids are selected three years in advance.

But what the proponents of the process blissfully forget is that the people who are working on the bids five or six years ahead of time, do so of their own volition.

They know and accept the procedure and most embrace the challenge.

The change would also open the process to the influences of larger, resort areas such as, say Orlando, Fla., which wouldn't mind the influx of a few thousand visitors for a few days.

Such tourism machines would have a distinct advantage over the small volunteer groups that usually formulate and push the bids for smaller cities. These groups take longer to gain the voters' notice and favor than say Mickey Mouse, Disney and Universal studios would.

The exclusionary area would also mean that Canadian cities such as Toronto or Winnipeg (which hosted a Worldcon a few years back) could lose out if either Chicago or Philadelphia hosts a Worldcon the previous year.

Less than a day after this year's Worldcon finished in Baltimore, fans were already discussing the potential downside of the proposed changes.

With only one or two exceptions, the idea isn't gaining many fans especially on this side of the border.

There's still more than a year before the next Worldcon and the vote and it's easy to see the lobbying effort for both sides of the issue.

☆ ☆ ☆

A quick note of appreciation to all our supporters who put Parsec on the final ballot of the Prix Aurora Award. It's truly a heady experience to be grouped with such luminaries of Canadian science fiction and fantasy. And we'll continue to try to measure up to the confidence that you've placed in us.

— Chris

Canucks collect fantasy nods

Canadian authors and editors have been selected for the final ballot of the World Fantasy Awards.

The awards will be presented at the World Fantasy Convention in Monterey, Ca. The convention runs Oct. 29 to Nov. 1.

TRADER, by Charles de Lint (Tor); "The Inner Inner City" by Robert Charles Wilson (NORTHERN FRIGHTS 4, MOSAIC PRESS); NORTHERN FRIGHTS 4, Ed. Don Hutchison (Mosaic Press); and THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF FANTASY, Ed. John Clute and John Grant (Orbit, St. Martin's) all appear on the ballot.

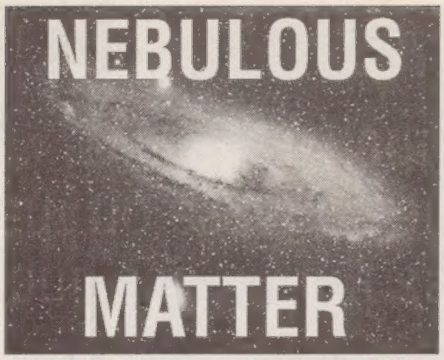
Information on the convention is available on the web at: http://www.pensfa.org/wfc98

Upcoming video releases

Science fiction and fantasy fans will have plenty to choose from this fall. Studios will be releasing a number of videos to help ease the chill of autumn.

Warner Brothers will be releasing a three-video collection of **Babylon 5** on Oct. 6. The collection includes the pilot and four episodes.

Got a hankering for a little animated fantasy? Then Warner Home Video's Quest for Camelot is for you. The video, featuring the voices of Pierce



Brosnan, Jane Seymour and Don Rickles will be released Oct. 13

MGM/Warner Home Video will release Species II on Oct. 20. Like the first installment, No. 2 features Canada's Natasha Henstridge as Sil.

Columbia TriStar Home Video's Godzilla will hit stores on Nov. 3. While the much-hyped and under-attended flick was, well, a bomb in theatres, the giant lizard may end up ruling the video kingdom.

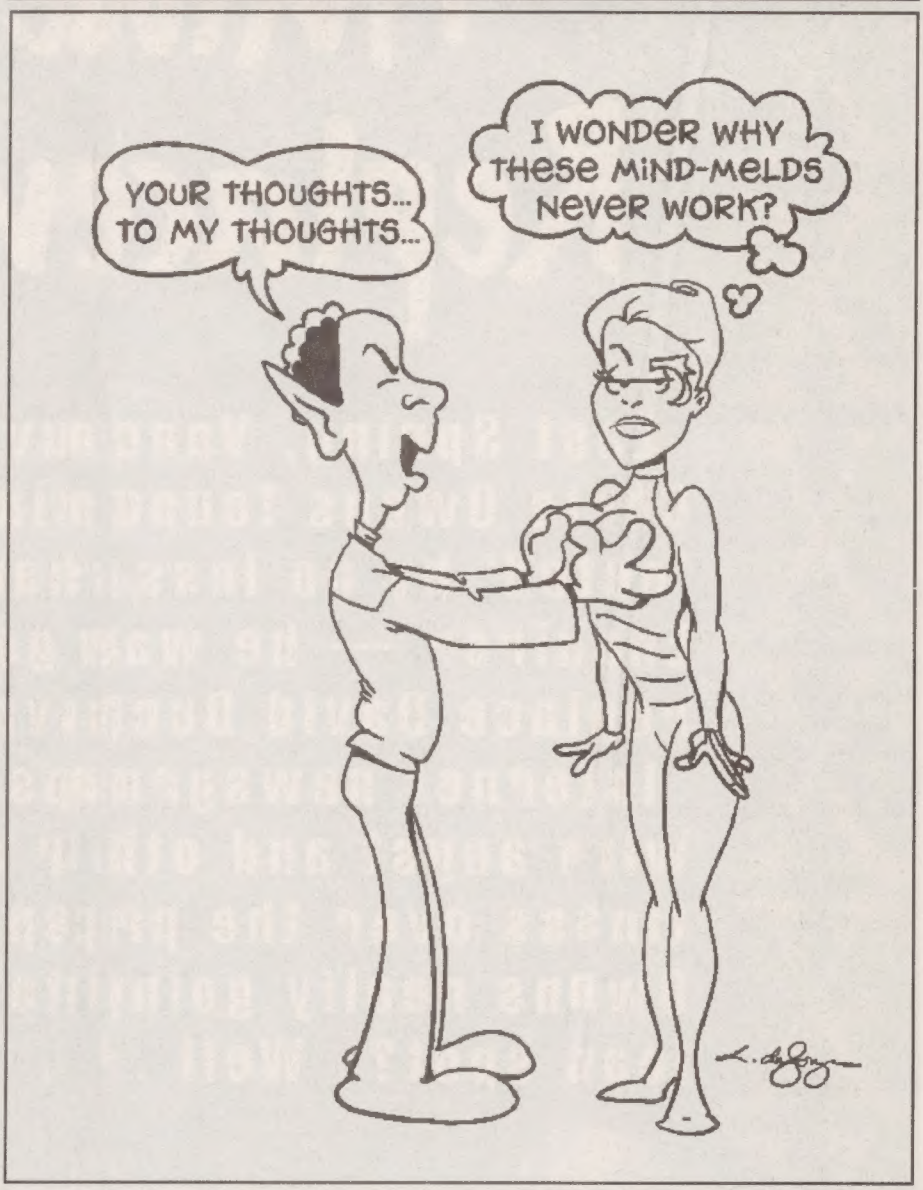
Our Mistake

An interview with author Kevin J. Anderson and book review appearing in the last issue of Parsec inadvertently called his latest novel El! Pedrito. The book's title is Ai! Pedrito!.

Parsec regrets the error.

☆

deSouza



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Mulder's Replacement

Last Spring, Vancouver actor Chris Owens found himself being 'outed' by no less than the National Enquirer — he was going to replace David Duchovny, it reported. Internet newsgroups were filled with angst and other assorted nastiness over the prospect . . . but is Owens really going to take over the lead spot? Well . . .

By
CHRIS KREJLGAARD

There is a scene in the first episode of the X-Files where the apparent victim of an alien abduction finds himself at the centre of a swirling, violent wind. Arms outstretched, he looks upward into a glaring light as leaves and other forest matter flies in the maelstrom that surrounds him.

In real life, that would be Chris Owens.

The Toronto-born actor has been outed by the National Enquirer — but not in the traditional sense. Owens was named by the U.S. tabloid as the man who would replace Fox Mulder on the X-Files.

It was a news snippet that put Owens squarely in the cross-hairs of the legion of Duchovny fans — fans who were quick to defend their embattled icon.

Owens laughs at the notion of being outed by the tabloid, and he stresses that he is not David Duchovny's replacement on the series, "No one can replace David," he says.

"David and Gillian (Anderson) are just great to work with. The X-Files wouldn't be the X-Files without them."

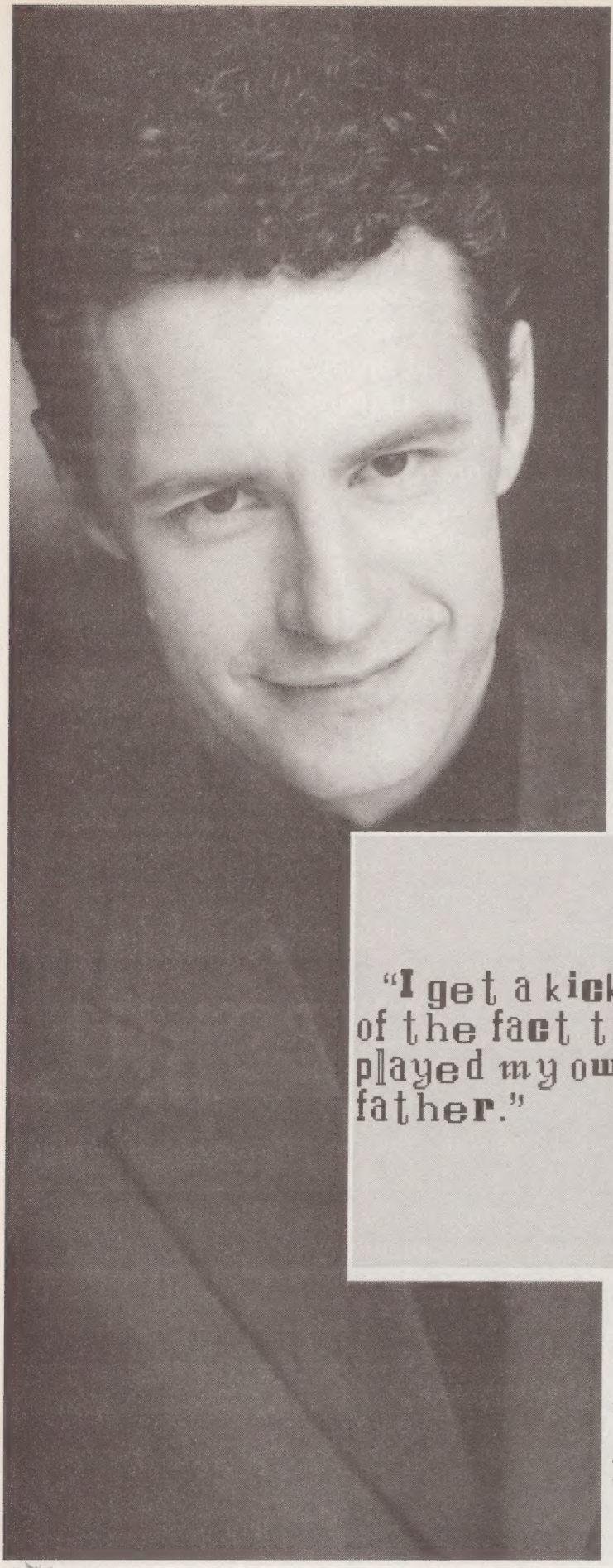
At the time, Owens had just signed on to play Agent Jeffrey Spender for three episodes during that second half of last season.

The first two had already aired when the National Enquirer raised the disbelieving hackles of X-Philes. The third turned out to be the season-ender when he came face to face with the Cigarette Smoking Man as Mulder's office was engulfed in flames. This, Owens explained, meant his character will likely return for the season premiere next fall. His character wasn't in this summer's movie.

"With the cliffhanger, the pieces fall into place and the character got closer to Scully," Owens said. "Spender is going to be looking for the truth."

The way the season ended, count on seeing Owens more in the coming season. Owens said, the character could return for about 12 episodes during the season — even with the much-ballyhooed departure of the series from Vancouver to southern California.

"If everything goes well, I will be in at least 12 episodes. But I'm not replacing David, I'm only there to give him a break and allow him to spend time with his



wife.

"I'm really excited about the prospects."

The day after Owens was interviewed, X-Files creator Chris Carter announced that the show was moving to Los Angeles next season, thus eliminating what has been called the "third lead actor," the unique British Columbia scenery that created much of the show's atmosphere.

But the inclusion of Owen's character next season does promise to bring something to the show's mix. With his relationship to the enigmatic Cigarette Smoking Man, there are a number of intriguing storylines that it can follow.

It also provides an interesting tie-in to one of the most-memorable episodes, Musings of a Cigarette Smoking Man.

In that episode, he played the Cigarette Smoking Man during his younger days when he was protecting the United States from the likes of John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King Jr.

As shooting was being completed, Owen's bumped into actor William Davis who plays the Cigarette Smoking Man.

Davis's only words to Owens, who was carrying the herbal cigarette after shooting the scene, "My god, you don't actually smoke those things do you?"

"I love the intrigue," Owens said with a chuckle. "I get a kick out of the fact that I played my own father."

Spender is actually Owens' third character on the series and his fourth for Carter.

Earlier last season, he played the peanut butter guzzling, Cher worshiping two-headed Mutato.

"The makeup took five hours to apply and an hour to take off," Owens recounted. "That's the nice thing about Spender, no long periods in the chair."

Owens also appeared in Carter's other series, Millennium.

"I get a kick out of the fact that I played my own father."

On that show, he portrayed a rather slow-witted, but good-natured deputy. It was his first brush with Carter and the X-Files conspiracy factory, but it was another in a long line of divergent characters that have been Owen's stock in trade since he turned to professional acting in the early '80s.

Since his school didn't offer a performing arts program, he began taking on roles in community theatres in the Don Mills area of Toronto as a teenager.

After graduating, he studied briefly in New York, before gaining a role on the CBC sitcom, Hanging In. On the series he played a hypochondriac.

From there he has taken on roles in such movies as Giant Mine, Paris or Somewhere and Cocktail, as well as such series as Psi Factor, Tek War, Street Legal and Kung Fu.

He also managed to do a sizeable amount of stage work between these projects.

Through it all he has portrayed such characters as a miner, a boxer, a homosexual and a bad guy or two.

Now he stands in the midst of a swirling mass of conspiracy theories and fan angst, as an FBI agent searching for the truth.

And a place in X-Files lore.

☆

Space comes a callin'

From Space 1999 to Star Wars to Space Island One, Angus MacInnes has spent almost as much time in space as he has on Earth

Photo courtesy of Space: the Imagination Station

Don't expect intergalactic space battles when it comes to Space Island One. The series is more grounded in science than in the fantastic. Here, the crew searches for a solution to a dilemma. Pictured (front left-right) William Oliver as chief science officer Lyle Campbell, Bruno Eyron as avionics specialist Dusan Kashkavian, Judy Loe as Commander Kathryn McTiernan; (back row) Kourosh Asad as medical officer Kaveh Homayuni and Angus MacInnes as second-in-command Walter B. Shannon.

By
CHRIS KREJLGAARD

Space Island One is, according to one of its main players, a unique production in a world of science fiction usually dominated by space ships and aliens.

"The idea behind it in terms of science fiction, I thought, was a really clean, interesting new concept that hasn't been explored very well," explained Windsor native Angus MacInnes who plays Walter B. Shannon on the series.

"Although it is really hard to say it's science fiction in terms of the stereotype that we're really used to, the guys with rubber ears and warp speed and all that, it's much more futuristic than science fiction where science is applied in a fictional sense."

The 26-episode British production takes place on a space station orbiting 250 kilometres above the Earth. The station is based on the international space station that will be launched in the the next couple of years.

It airs in Canada on Space: the Imagination Station.

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Next Things

OK, this is more for people over the age of 35, but remember the Aurora movie monster models when you were a kid?

Well, they're back with a vengence. Polar Lights has been busy re-introducing these models to Generation X.

The most recent ones to hit the market have been the Wolf Man's Wagon and the Cyclops-Robinson family diorama from Lost In Space.

The two join other models in their respective series.

Polar Lights has already released the Mummy's Chariot and the Frankenstein Fliver and the Jupiter 2 and cyclops version sans chariot

By the end of the year, Polor Lights will be releasing the fabled Creature From the Black Lagoon model.

The company has also announced the release of a cold-cast porcelin model kit of the Wolfman.

Based on the 1941 Lon Chaney film by Universal, the kit was designed by Randy Bowen. It comes in 14 pieces and, when fully assembled, stands 18 inches high and 15 inches wide.

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European and Asian markets, another 26-episode order could be made.

Since Day One, Space Island One held one of those rare opportunities for MacInnes.

"When I read the brief they sent me and the first script I just about died. I thought 'well I've been waiting for this script for such a long time'.

"It's been years that I've been waiting to do good science fiction or what I thought had the potential to be good science fiction. Here's something where I can pick up Scientific America, flip through the pages, see a plot and say 'yeah, this would hold up and be believable' because it's real. And that's what is exciting, because it's real, it's not bullshit."

When I read the brief they sent me and the first script I just about died. I thought 'well I've been waiting for this script for such a long time'

Rather than deal with such tried-and-true plot devices as alien visitations or intergalactic voyages, Space Island Earth focuses on the lives of the station's seven-man crew and on their work laying the stepping stones for space voyages.

"It's about the seven people up there, who have occasional visitors and the dramas that occur to them."

MacInnes plays a former NASA test pilot who serves as the station's second-in-command.

The character is, by MacInnes's description, a bit of a tough guy and an old hand to life in space.

Shannon, because of his marine background, carries an attitude that runs contrary to those of scientists on the station. But over the course of the series, the character becomes a father figure for some of the crew, while for others, he becomes a bit of an "abrasive sonofabitch," according to MacInnes.

The character, by all accounts, is a mixture of the others that MacInnes has portrayed during his long tenure in film and television — much of which falls under the category of science fiction/action.

MacInnes attended the Ontario School of Dramatic Arts at the University of Windsor. It was a career move that MacInnes never dreamed of making a few years earlier when he was driving around Windsor's streets with his friends.

"Acting was thought to be a bit faggy," he said recollecting teen-aged perceptions.

A high school assembly changed all those thoughts, eventually.

"I did an assembly once and a teacher came to me and said 'you know you should do some acting'," he recalled. "I just fell about laughing."

A few months later, he was asked to audition for a play. With nothing else to do at the time, he was intrigued enough, thanks to the earlier suggestion, to audition. He got the part, and then another and then "boom, done finished. I was suddenly an actor."

After graduating in the early 1970s, he began a year of post-graduate work at the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art. It was there, during a year dedicated to gaining work experience, that he started gaining roles in films.

"Films are a great love and my preferred medium," MacInnes explained. "Because you have a lot more time, there's a lot more you can achieve and

SPACE
THE IMAGINATION STATION

Looking for Space Island One?

The series airs on Space: the Imagination Station
Mondays at 8 p.m. and Sundays at 3 p.m.

Photo courtesy of Space: the Imagination Station

Space Island One's Walter B. Shannon is a role that Canadian-born Angus MacInnes (front) has waited to play for a long time. Also pictured is William Oliver as chief science officer Lyle Campbell.

there are just too many compromises with television, because the audience is much broader."

Over the years, MacInnes has appeared in such well-known films as Star Wars (as gold leader), Rollerball (as Jim), Outland (as Hughes) and Superman II (as the prison guard). He's also appeared in more contemporary flicks as Judge Dredd (as Judge Silver) and Hellbound-Hellraiser II (as the detective). In a more dramatic vein, he's portrayed a corrupt cop in Witness and a gangster in Atlantic City.

He's also managed a number of television roles, including a recurring part on Space: 1999.

"With Shannon, there's echoes of a lot of the characters that I've played in other films because I've done a lot of science fiction and a lot of action pictures," MacInnes says of his latest television role.

"You carry some of that entity into each role, but hopefully some of the good and not the bad."

Now a resident of Edinburgh, Scotland, MacInnes has also seen the good and bad sides of filmmaking. His resume includes work on a movie which he considers a watershed for science fiction on film, Star Wars, as well as a movie which falls at the other end of the spectrum, Judge Dredd.

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- ❍ Strange Brew
- ❍ Superman II
- ❍ Star Wars: A New Hope
- ❍ Rollerball
- ❍ Outland
- ❍ Witness

on the small screen

- ❍ Space 1999
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The Wave Breaks

With such credits as the X-Files and Species II on his resume, Chris Brancato takes on the challenges of a weekly series with the First Wave

Photo courtesy of Space: the Imagination Station

One man can save the world from an alien invasion. The trouble is that no one is willing to believe that attractive people could really be extraterrestrial spies.

On a number of fronts, First Wave is an appropriate title for the upcoming new series.

The Vancouver-shot science fiction show represents the first Canadian-made series that will air first-run on Space: The Imagination Station, so it is the first wave of Canadian programs that channel promised.

The series follows the exploits of Cade Foster who tries to expose the alien infiltration of mankind. The spies are the first wave of the alien invasion force.

And it is also the first series-producing effort for Chris Brancato.

Brancato, who sports a sizeable writing resume, has joined forces with Francis Ford Coppola to make the series become a reality.

"I was interested in telling a story that was sort of a hero's journey and I wanted to draw on some of the types of shows that I very much liked. And try to create a show that would allow us to tell all sorts of interesting stories, most of which have pretty freaky or pretty strange circumstances and make a show that was sexy science fiction," Brancato explained during a break in shooting late last month.

In developing the premise for the series, Brancato borrowed from a number of his favorite shows such as the Twilight Zone and the X-Files. One of his favorite series provides the inspiration for the series' major plotline — The Fugitive.

"In the series, the hero has his life destroyed by aliens. They've killed his wife

and framed him for her murder," Brancato says. "So while he's trying to reveal the truth about the aliens, he always has to look over his shoulder."

Of the 22 episodes that will be filmed, Brancato will write about eight or nine and will "tweak up the rest."

In First Wave, Brancato portrays aliens who are sexy and beautiful.

"They disguise themselves in beautiful human shells, and because people are so willing to accept beauty on face value, they had a rather easy time infiltrating our society," he explains. "I thought that a set up like that would allow us to send our hero always paranoid into different circumstances."

While it may be Coppola's first full season series, it isn't the first time he's worked in science fiction.

"During his early days he worked with Roger Corman (the legendary director who produced such B-movie fare as the Attack of the Crab Creatures and Little Shop of Horrors — the original) and he did Dracula."

And the Coppola name also carries clout the kind of clout a new series needs.

"His involvement makes people willing to take a look at the show," Brancato said.

Despite his admitted affection for crime and romantic comedies, Brancato

Continued on page 56

Photo courtesy of Space: the Imagination Station

Adding to the hero's problem is that he's been branded a criminal and is constantly on the run — Brancato's homage to one of his favorite television programs when he was growing up — The Fugitive

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Photo by Gregg Chamberlain

David Gerrold has worked on two of the best-known science fiction programs on television. For his latest effort, he is joining forces with a studio unaffected by the 'Hollywood way of thinking.

David Gerrold's *Quest*

By
GREGG CHAMBERLAIN

The man who brought Tribbles to television viewers, now focuses his energy on a project much closer to his heart

His past fiction work includes novels like When Harlie Was One and The Man Who Folded Himself, Hugo and Nebula nominee variations on the classic themes of artificial intelligence and time travel.

He has scripted episodes of Babylon 5 and The New Twilight Zone. He served as story editor/producer during the first season of Star Trek: The Next Generation. His current novel series, The War Against The Chtorr, is up to four volumes with a fifth on the way.

David Gerrold laughs then at the observation that his most famous story, the classic Star Trek episode, "The Trouble With Tribbles," means he is the sf writer best known for writing about pest control.

"Yeah, actually I never thought of it that way. It was pest control."

Gerrold's dealings in tribbles didn't end when he sold the script that later became a Hugo nominee. He wrote "More Tribbles, More Troubles" for the Star Trek animated series and was a red-shirted extra in some corridor scenes of the Deep Space Nine episode that used digital technology to let Sisko and Co. mingle with the crew of the original Enterprise in a reprise of the classic

Trek tribble story.

That was fun though, on the down side, Gerrold and Paramount still disagree about whether he is owed anything for the reuse of his script in a format not covered by the original sale contract.

Gerrold jokes that he "continues to stick little pins into a map of Hollywood.

If so, it's not just because of the dispute with Paramount. His latest project is the screen adaptation of his semi-autobiographical novelette, "The Martian Child," which won science fiction's triple crown of the Locus readers' poll and the Nebula and Hugo awards for 1995. The project might have ended stillborn because of the ignorance of the "Hollywood mind set."

If you talk to any serious writer, basically what you'll hear is 'The job of the writer is to report back.'

About 90 per cent of "The Martian Child" is autobiographical. The story is about the relationship between Gerrold and his adopted son, Sean, in the guise of a science-fiction writer who begins to suspect that his own adopted child is an alien.

"The Martian Child" may be the most personally precious pieces of work Gerrold has ever written. So he was angered when a big-name production studio refused to consider letting him adapt his own story given his screenwriting experience.

"And they didn't get what an insult it was."

After turning the studio down, he got a call asking if he'd reconsidered. When told he still wouldn't be allowed to do the adaptation, Gerrold said thanks but no thanks.

Gerrold has since struck a deal with Bonneville, one of the smaller production companies not yet infected by the "Hollywood-way of thinking." Bonneville had no argument about Gerrold doing the screen adaptation. The only concern Gerrold has now is doing it right.

"There's a piece of 'magic' in the story," he said. "You don't know if the kid is a Martian or not."

While that sort of ambiguity is possible to achieve in a text story, it's difficult to get across on the screen. There's also the trick of getting that 'yes/no/maybe' feeling in a movie script which has to expand on the original story some.

"It (script) has to take us to places not possible in a 15,000-word story and to fill two hours."

The solution?

Write the end first. Gerrold feels he has succeeded in working out an ending which suggests that feeling of 'is the kid an alien or not?'

"Now we have to figure out how to get from the beginning to the end."

It is important to him to preserve the "magic" of the story. What he does not want is for his "child" to end up like some of the latest screen adaptations of Robert A. Heinlein's works which he feels are missing the original spirit of the books.

"I owe a debt to the people who read the story and voted the awards." It also goes back to his belief about what a writer is supposed to do.

Photo courtesy of and © Paramount Pictures

The Trouble With Tribbles was one of the original series most-memorable episodes. Its use for Star Trek Deep Space Nine has caused writer David Gerrold some irritation.

"If you talk to any serious writer, basically what you'll hear is 'The job of the writer is to report back.'

"That means you have to go out and live life."

The above is essential to Gerrold's way of thinking. Writers either make everything up in their stories, "writing by remote control" as he describes it, or use their own life as a source of inspiration. The last, he believes, is best.

"The more I do that, the better the writing gets."

The success of "The Martian Child" plus feedback from peers and fans support his belief. What matters, Gerrold says, is people. Many writers he knows understand where he's coming from.

"When you get rid of all the 'stuff,' what you're left with is people." Some writers, Gerrold observed, tend to let themselves get invested in writing about things. With maturity, a writer focuses on the person, the human factor.

"The writing thus is an expression of the person."

Gerrold sees "The Martian Child" as a breakthrough, both personally and professionally. There is a blurring in the narrative of the borders between fantasy and reality. The ending leaves the reader still wondering whether or not the child of the narrator is alien and whether it really matters.

"It forces the reader to look at life differently."

Gerrold jokes that since Sean became part of his life, he finds it hard stay cynical. But fatherhood is not mellowing out

Continued on page 52

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Harris relishes career of comedic villainy

By
CHRIS KREJLGAARD

Jonathan Harris occupies two very special places in popular science fiction.

Even though he has appeared in more than 600 television episodes, first and foremost, he is Dr. Zachary Smith — he of the chronically weakened back and extended alliteration; the pox borne by the Robinson family on Lost in Space.

"I love Smith," Harris exclaimed. "I was given a rare opportunity by Mr. Allen (the series' creator, Irwin Allen). I was allowed to create the role from the ground up.

"Thanks to him, I made a career out of comedic villainy."

During the course of Lost in Space's three-season run, Dr. Smith underwent a dramatic metamorphosis. In the early days, he was the saboteur out to scuttle the launch of the Jupiter II. Then he became the lagabout, content to watch others perform the tasks necessary for survival.

"I was playing this dreadful man who had to be killed off in the first four or five episodes unless I did something," Harris recalled. "So I snuck in a little comedy and I watched to see if Irwin noticed. He did."

But rather than chastise Harris, Allen gave him carte blanche. And the character, and the series, lasted 84 episodes.

"It was all very carefully thought out and planned. Nothing that people saw on the show was happenstance."

But Dr. Smith was only part of the equation that provided the foundation for the series during its last two seasons.

The other two parts were provided by Will Robinson (Billy Mumy) and the Robot.

In Will, Dr. Smith had a protege. It was a relationship that surpassed the family-aspect that was established during the series' early days. Even three decades later, the two actors remain close and meet for lunch on a frequent basis.

"I had an excellent straight man in the robot and I made Will a hero," Harris said. "I created all those facets of the show."

Among the facets were, Dr. Smith delicate back that was the running excuse to keep him out of work and the alliteratives (like Bubble-headed Booby) he hurled at the Robot each week.

"I had a pad and a pencil next to my bed and in the middle of the night I would wake up and write one down."

For years, these alliterative gems were lost on new generations of potential fans. Of course, the recent New Line movie adaptation cast attention on the series — sans references to "adlepated tinpot."

One of the selling points for the movie was the cameo appearances of some of the original cast members — except for Harris and Mumy.

"They wanted me to do six lines and they called that a cameo," Harris said of the role of the spymaster. "And in one scene, it was a hologram."

Even if the role had been beefed up a bit, it is questionable that he would have made an appearance in the movie.

"I am Dr. Smith," he said. "I am identified as Dr. Smith.

Before Lost in Space, Harris co-starred in The Third Man with his friend Michael Rennie.

I couldn't be anyone but him."

A decade after Dr. Smith and the Robinson family left the airways, there was Lucifer and Battlestar Galactica.

In that universe, Harris provided the voice for the robotic Cylon that served as Baltar (played by Canadian actor John Colicos) somewhat untrustworthy second in command.

It was an experience that taxed the skills he has amassed during the years on the stage, in movies and television before Battlestar Galactica in the late 1970s.

"Lucifer was very hard to do," Harris explained recently. "I was asked to read some dialogue. I read three or four pages, but I couldn't get a handle on him. So I asked for more pages."

The pages came and with them, a better vision of the character.

"There was a character named Baltar who I decided was my boss and that I wanted to get rid of him. But I couldn't let him know so I had to be very cool and very slick about it.

"So I thought I would give Lucifer a voice like a lovely pussy cat that wouldn't be a danger to Mr. Baltar . . . I was hired on the spot."

But getting the role was the easy part. During the season that the series aired on ABC in the United States, While other members of the cast performed their lines on a sound stag, Harris was in a recording booth.

"Working in a recording booth is not as easy as you would believe," he said. "You work without another actor to give you direction. You don't hear their voices and tones so you can't react to them."

As difficult as the performing voice-over work may be, Harris has made a career of it.

For almost 30 years, he has provided voices on a variety or projects for television and for motion pictures.

His latest assignment has him providing the voice of Manny the preying mantis in the upcoming Disney release, A Bug's Life.

"It is a beautiful film," he said. "You just listen to the voices of these people and you forget that it is an animated movie."

☆

Not your typical comic book

Ottawa's Dreamer Comics opts to forget super-powered, costumed heroes and turn to the the metaphysical

By
CHRIS KREJLGAARD

Photo by Mark Sandford

Editor in Chief and writer Christopher Gerow and colorist Angel Poisson and others behind the creation of Sojourn have been travelling to conventions across North America to generate fan interest in the full-colour title.

Chris Gerow pauses for a second as he reflects back on the genesis of Dreamer Comics.

The Ottawa-based company released its first comic book, Sojourn, last May. The book is a slick, well-written tome that chronicles the battles of C.T.— a paranormal adept — as he protects and tutors a novice in magic, Aurora.

It is a far cry from his initial idea for entering the comic book industry by creating a Canadian-based superhero team called Aurora.

"It was a fine concept," said Gerow. "But in hindsight it was kind of silly for us to do a superhero comic in an industry that has at least three major companies.

"It was a good thing that we didn't do it. I don't know how long it would have lasted."

In an industry where super-powered heroes of all ilks are vying for readers' attention and money, Gerow and the rest of the people at Dreamer Comics Corp. have taken a decidedly different approach.

They prefer to tackle a heady combination of the metaphysical, religious, cultural differences, espionage and intrigue. The plot draws on elements from other stories that the 28-year-old Gerow has developed during the years.

"I'm also a fan of John Woo movies and I wanted to get elements of that in too," he added.

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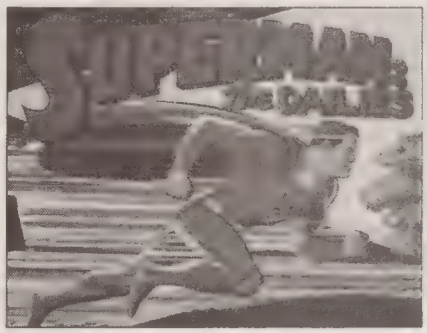
Superman: the Dailies — DC. Comics; 560 pages, scheduled release date: Oct. 21; SRP $18 (U.S.) *A homage to a simpler time when all villains wore tights and masks*



Dark Minds #3 — Image Comics; 32 pages, scheduled release date: NA; SRP $2.50 (U.S.) ***Exquisite!!!*** *The Canadian-based crew behind this masterpiece of storytelling deserves a round of applause.*

Space Gal #2 — Thorby Comics;, scheduled release date: Oct.; SRP $2.95 (U.S.) *OK, we like the name, but the artwork is inspiring.*

WHY BOTHER?

Superman: the Doomsday Wars — DC. Comics; scheduled release date: Sept. 30; SRP $4.95 (U.S.) *The original was more media event than anything else, so why revisit it?*

Scenes from the premiere issue of Sojourn.

It is a combination that has struck a chord with readers at conventions in Canada and the United States — to the point where second printings of the first two issues are being planned.

Sojourn's third issue sold well at the annual convention in Chicago in July. It has also developed a loyal following in the Ottawa area.

Unlike most efforts by small comic book publishers, Sojourn is a full-color, high-gloss effort. It clearly underscores the investment in both money and time that the handful of people behind Dreamer Comics have expended since the concept for the story was first formed three years ago.

"Technically, everything began around 1995," Gerow recalls. "Evan (publisher Evan Foulkes) and I made an attempt with a superhero comic book, but we lost our investors the month we were scheduled to publish."

So the partnership went into limbo, while the two moved into different directions — Gerow to college and Foulkes to Miami.

Last year, with a sizeable bankroll to back the project, Foulkes asked Gerow if he was still interested in leaving his work as a freelance television cameraman and making a foray into the world of comics.

Soon, the two were assembling the team.

Besides Gerow and Foulkes, colorist Angel Poisson — who worked as an assistant on the ill-fated Aurora effort — formed the foundation of Dreamer Comics.

Poisson brought letterer Shellie Harris into the group. While a newspaper advertisement drew responses from about 200 artists. Jim Somerville, whose resume includes such efforts as Malestrom for Aerosol Comics, as well as both the Aliens and Predator titles and the Thing from Another World for Dark Horse Comics, responded to the call and now, with Poisson, forms the artistic heart of the company.

"Everyone is in this for the long haul," Gerow said.

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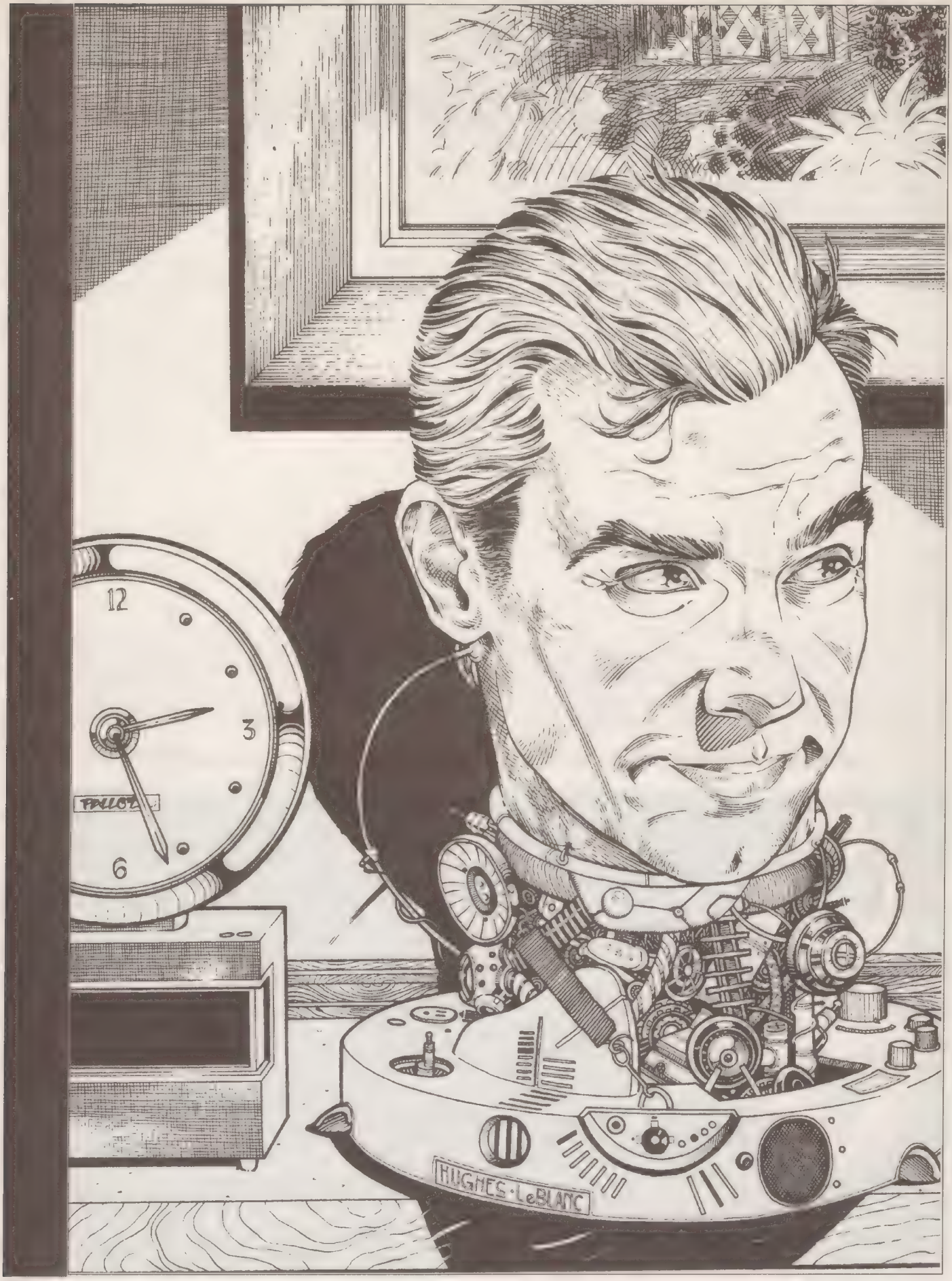
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HUGHES·LeBLANC

Cyberlid

Story by
Dave Humbert
Art by
Terry Pallot

The following is an extract from a report impounded at the documentation centre of CompuStat. Its author is a meta-scribe, that odious, ill-starred class of cyborgs charged with documenting the past. The report is indubitable proof, my brothers, that even one of our best cybernetic historians cannot be trusted to remain objective in its outlook. In other words, prepare yourselves for a botched report, my brothers.

And be warned. This meta-scribe is still at large, though he faces, now, a sea of troubles.

Mr. D. was a model husband, kind and loyal to his wife, until one day his head had to be cut from his body. In the beginning his wife showed great sympathy, and was by no means the first in the 21st Century to have to face the prospect of a bodiless spouse. Though advances in medicine had brought not only her but many others into this pass, not all had reacted so firmly and responsibly as she. When faced with the prospect of a mere head to accompany them into their declining years, the reaction of most spouses was often sheer horror and even rejection.

More and more people have had to face this unfortunate situation, especially since the onset, early in the 21st Century, of "total cancer." This name was actually a misnomer, because this particular disease was not a cancer at all. Caused in reality by a slow-acting, flesh-eating virus produced in the laboratories of the infamous Seth syndicate, the disease attacked all organs of the body simultaneously, with the curious exception of the brain. In the absence of a vaccine, the only treatment possible was to amputate the entire body and preserve the head according to the technique pioneered later in middle of the century by the youthful genius Hughes-LeBlanc.

Hughes-Leblanc developed a further technique some ten years later: a cyber-link operation which attached the head to a cybernetic body. While production of these units was costly and slow (legal red-tape chronically held up the operations), the progress of the total cancer virus was swift, and demand for cybernetic bodies greatly outstripped supply. The result was an increasingly large backlog of amputee heads, preserved by the small Hughes-LeBlanc stands and power units which provided the entire life support. The lucky ones with money could look forward within a year or so to a cyber-link operation — the rest, abandoned, rejected or penniless, descended into the twilight existence of the Futurehold bio-warehouses provided by the state.

The compact shape of these "cyberlids," as they came to be known, was ideal for storage and maintenance. Even so the Ministry for Bio-cybernetics had problems accommodating them. At first, when total cancer was new and public sympathy was at its height, spacious and luxurious quarters in the human-matter quads were provided.

But as time passed and public interest faded, the storage quads containing fetuses became pressed for space. More and more voices were heard questioning the value of preserving abandoned or penniless cyberlids at all, in preference to fetuses whose potential for life at some time in the future was much greater.

In short, unpleasant decisions had to be made. The cyberlids were given the alternative of either being frozen indefinitely in the hopes that a new body would be provided them in the future, or of committing suicide, or of accepting smaller—much smaller—accommodation.

Storing the cyberlids in their new space-efficient environment presented innumerable problems, not the least of which

were psychological in nature. Despite their drastic reduction in size, many cyberlids still insisted on a full-size room, even though, from a logical point of view, they could not hope to walk around in it or do anything useful there.

Nevertheless, the majority adjusted, though CompuStat has demonstrated a disturbing increase in the cyberlid rate of schizophrenia and mental dysfunction, and in requests for the suicide option, after the change of quarters.

Some, however, thrived on the unique opportunities for socializing with their fellow cyberlids. Those who were talkative found ample opportunity to speak to any number of neighbours at close range in the nearby cubicles. Of course mistakes were often made in the arrangement of these cubicles, which in the beginning was altered upon request of any cyberlid who wanted to escape an unpleasant or too talkative neighbour.

But the response of their genetically-engineered Dwarfeen caretakers to such requests was slow. Delays abounded, and very often incompatible heads were left together for weeks or months, grating endlessly on each other's nerves. Of course their physical condition prevented any overt hostility, but many cyberlids became very adept at long-range spitting. Unpleasant and very chaotic battles broke out, with spit flying in all directions. The cyberlids, too, became past masters at the verbal insult, venting through facial expressions and words that normal individuals express with their whole bodies . . .

Some release from monotony was afforded by Virreal games, but without bodies the pleasure in these games was severely hampered. The control mechanisms were specially adapted to fit cyberlid mouths, and most became very adept at manipulating their imaginary bodies with lips, tongue and teeth. In this way they could at least bask for a while in the illusion of having a real body and engaging in thrilling adventures or visiting strange planets.

Drawbacks remained, however. As CompuStat has shown, mental dysfunction and schizophrenia increased sharply with rate of use of these games, far more than in normal individuals. It seems that the lack of bodily envelope reduced the individual's ability to distinguish imagination and reality. Use of the games was therefore restricted, and most of the time the cyberlids were left to talk, watch the 3D, or swivel quietly on their stands, humming to themselves.

Mr. D. however was one of the lucky ones. He was blessed with a prudent and sober wife who knew how to take the bull by the horns when necessary.

She brought him home in her car after the operation. She was even thoughtful enough to bring pillows to prop him up, making him thoroughly comfortable in the back seat, and informed him in a business-like way that she was having a customized attachment installed which would allow him to sit at window-level and look out.

The organic component of his brain complex has obviously been transformed, either by his experiences with the novelist or as a result of the time travel itself.

A Virreal system had been installed at home, which meant they could both take trips in time and space outfitted with any sort of body they might wish. Knowing that his wife Delia had always resisted getting one of these games, and had always refused even to play them, Mr. D. was deeply moved. It appeared that she was trying to do her best to adjust to his new condition. She was doing it all for him, when many others had simply run away . . .

At home he was placed on the mantlepiece, where he could survey the room and look into the small garden Delia kept in their walled-in backyard. He had dreaded coming home. Without his body the rooms which had been so familiar to him could not help but feel strange and alien. However, perched on his mantlepiece, watching Delia bustling about the place, he did not feel so awkward or helpless as he had feared.

You will note, my brothers, the strange turn the report has suddenly taken. The meta-scribe has obviously intruded, unjustifiably, into the subjective life of the cyberlid he was charged with documenting. After long discussions with the technicians of Tel, Ltd.'s laboratories, we have concluded that the wretched mechanism had been damaged by its previous assignment, which, inadvertently, involved an arduous period of time travel and a long sojourn with a "novelist" from early in the last millennium.

The organic component of his brain complex has obviously been transformed, either by his experiences with the novelist or as a result of the time travel itself. Hence the archaic language, the tone of irony, and the nearly mad observations on the so-called inner life of the cyberlid.

Not long after his homecoming, when she sat in front of him reading one evening, Mr. D. cleared his throat to make a serious and long-rehearsed announcement.

"My darling, words cannot express how much love and care you have shown me in the past few days. You have clearly decided that your life from now on is to be one long sacrifice . . . No! please don't protest. I want . . . I want to have my say. You have decided that life with half a man, or less than half, is better than life without that man at all. But we must both be rational. Don't think for a moment that I am going to suggest that I move to the bio-warehouses. We both know I could not face that. But if you are to be my caretaker and my friend I want to make caretaking and friendship as easy as I can for you. I want you to be . . . free."

"And just what do you mean by that?" his wife suddenly interjected in an indignant tone. She had bolted up and was standing in front of him with her hands on her hips, her face contorted in surprise.

Mr. D. began to falter. "I only mean . . . that if you should want, once in awhile . . . I mean if there is someone else who can satisfy you. As long as I don't know about it, there's no harm . . . Even a pleasure droid . . . they've come along way I understand."

"So you think I'm the kind of woman who'd use a pleasure droid!" She looked really angry.

"No — or, that is, I think just anything is alright, provided you can at least feel the warmth of a real body!"

"Oh" she shouted in anger, turning

away from him, but after a few moments walked back toward him with a slight smirk. She went up to the mantlepiece, folded her arms on the edge, and rested her chin on them, an inch or two from his face.

"So you think I need another man, huh?"

"No. Just a part-time one, to fill in the blanks, so to speak."

Suddenly she darted forward with a kiss, a long lingering one. But he managed to tear himself away with an abrupt swivel.

"Its no good, Delia. I'm like a castrated man. How can I possibly feel anything anyway?"

"James, you underestimate Hughes-LeBlanc." She began typing something in on the keypad on his base support.

"What are you doing?"

"Oh, the doctor told me about a program available on this system which simulates hormonal activity and awakens the erogenous capability of what is left of you. There's only one drawback."

"What's that?"

"You won't experience orgasm, only continuous pleasure. That's the one thing you need a body for."

"But Delia, really . . . "

When she had finished with the keypad she kissed him again and he felt a surge of pleasure about his ears and lips as she travelled about his head caressing him. Then she slipped aside the straps of her dress and stood on her tip-toes to give him her breasts . . .

After he had his fill, she picked him up, tucked him under her arm, and headed toward the bedroom, saying with a sly smile, "And now there is something you can do for me . . ."

Thus it was that Delia kept his spirits up in this and many other ways. But now and again she took a false step, stayed out too long shopping, or forgot to bring home his favourite magazine. Then there was hell to pay . . .

Life had its frustrations for Mr. D.: troubles and little humiliations broke him down bit by bit, though not much could bother him as long as the house computer Haas was in operation. Haas could dispatch service drones to obey any of Mr. D.'s commands, and vaporize at any distance insects which may have made Mr. D.'s existence a misery. But the time inevitably came when Haas needed upgrading, and Delia took him away for the morning to the maintenance centre.

And, of course, wouldn't it happen that one small housefly gained admittance through the open door, then to torment Mr. D. for the rest of the morning. . .

When Delia returned, a scene followed, after which Delia screamed in rage:

"I can't take this anymore. How can I be expected to control everything to please you, even the least little fly!"

"Well that's fine," he said coldly. "Perhaps its time for the bio-warehouse. Call them up right now!"

"All right. All right. I will." She strode over to the comm unit and asked Haas to find the number, looking for a few moments in fury at Mr. D.

"Zeh number iss dialing, meine Frau," said Haas in his patented German accent.

Suddenly, Delia grew pale and sorrowful looking, and told Haas quietly: "Forget it Haas, cancel the call."

"Ja wohl, meine Frau."

She turned around slowly and left the house, not even letting herself slam the door.

She missed having supper with him and did not return that evening. Around nine, the light began to fail and Mr. D. asked Haas to turn off the 3D.

"Jawohl, mein Herr. Vood you also like zat ze lights are put on for ze evening."

"No thank-you, Haas, I'd like to sit and look out the skylight for a while."

"Yes, mein Herr."

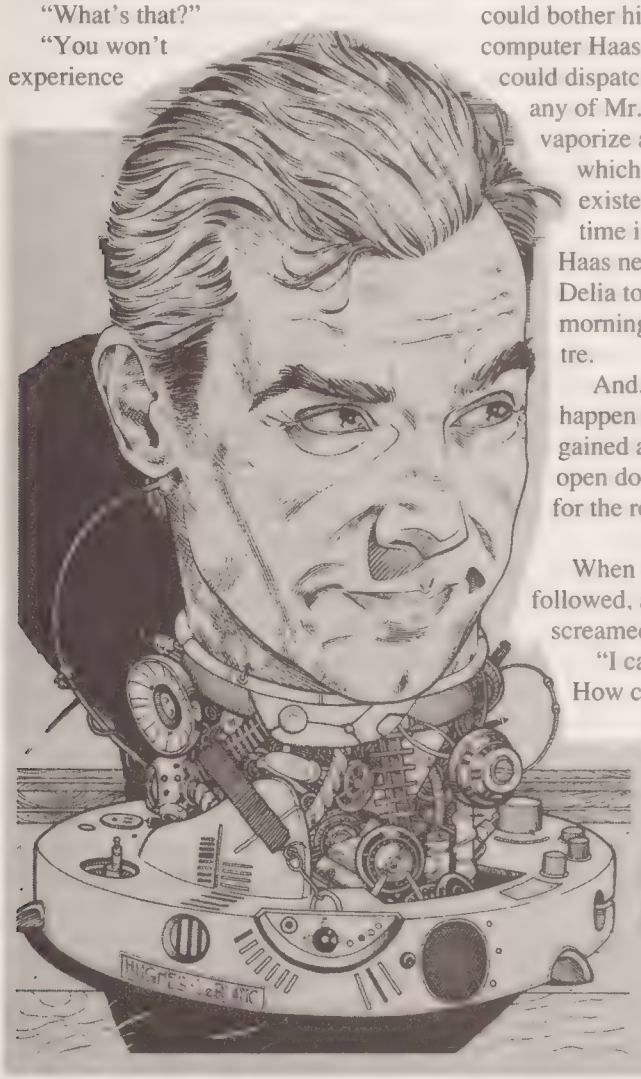
"And Haas."

"Yes, mein Herr."

"How about a change of accent and voice. That German one's getting on my nerves. Like suppose a South Carolina female voice, circa 1990?"

"Yes suh, as you wish."

And so Mr. D. sat for awhile, looking up at the starry vault of the black sky above. The moon was full. Moonlight streamed through the skylights, scattering little patches of illumination throughout the room. The silence was broken only by the occasional beeping from Haas as he performed his various surveillance, security and environmental functions. As for Mr. D. he sat in the shadows, his two eyes peering out sadly in the still, moonlit room.



At home he was placed on the mantlepiece, where he could survey the room and look into the small garden Delia kept in their walled-in backyard.

Clouds slid across the moon like slim, disembodied fingers as he waited for Delia to return. An hour, then two went by. Now and again he would swivel back and forth, humming a tune he had heard earlier in the day.

As he looked up at the pitch-black sky, he remembered an item he had seen on the 3D. After long delays and technical difficulties the international space administration was ready to launch the first hyper-drive probes to the nearest solar system. Because of their compact size, cyberlids with the appropriate qualifications were being considered as commanders for the drone and cyborg teams. The government was combing the bio-warehouses, but found only a few willing candidates. It was known even among the cyberlids that the procedure of hyper-drive was highly experimental. A good number of the test candidates had returned with severe neuroses or psychoses, while still others contracted horrifying immune deficiency syndromes . . .

Since the operation, his sleep had ceased to be cyclical. Regular sleep, too, it seemed, was impossible without a body. He had to simply wait, until he drifted off unawares. Minutes turned to hours and still he was awake. And still she had not returned.

Had she found a pleasure droid, an old acquaintance? He found himself thinking about what sort of droid she might choose. Surely she would avoid the uncanny ones with specially long tongues or super extendible penises — or those with extra limbs specialized in one lascivious function or another. He remembered with disgust a visit he made to a droidzone in the city before he was married. Drugged on cocaline-plus, he made the mistake of choosing a droid with multiple orifices. The experience was so nauseating in the end that he gave up both cocaline-plus and the droidzone.

With this and much else on his mind he finally, exhaustedly, drifted off to sleep.

He was awakened by Haas' warning chimes.

"Ah have an intrudah awn mah scope, suh."

The warning had to be repeated several times, as Mr. D. gradually shook off sleep. It was still dark, and up above in the skylight, he could see that the moon was now sheathed in cloud. He had only been asleep for a few minutes, or so it seemed.

"Is it Delia?" he stammered weakly, then opening and closing his eyes rapidly.

"No suh."

"Human?"

"Ah'm gettin' conflictin' readins, suh."

"Is the stun field active?"

"No, suh, it isn't. Y'all asked me to . . ."

Had she found a pleasure droid, an old acquaintance? He found himself thinking about what sort of droid she might choose.

"Alright, alright, I remember. Activate it now."

Pause.

Mr. D. began chewing on his lip, swivelling restlessly from side to side on his stand, his ears cocked for any detectable noise.

"Ineffective, suh. Thuh seems to be an anomaly in the readins that makes it . . . Thuh's maybe moe than one."

"Shush! I hear something." D.'s head stopped swivelling, and he strained his face to be able to hear. He heard a buzz and a click, a shuffle of feet, and then saw in the dim light of the room the tall, athletic figure of a man carrying someone unconscious in his arms.

He could tell from the two pinpoint diodes in his eyes when they were turned toward him. It was a kind of signature required by law. All cyborgs must be identifiable as such.

"She was very upset. She'd obviously never been there before."

"The droidzone?"

"The droidzone."

Delia lay fast asleep on the couch where she had been gently laid by the cyborg. There was a vague scent in the room, the sickly-sweet odour of cocaline-plus.

It was somewhat of a relief to know that the cyborg that had brought her home was not a pleasure droid. It sat quietly in the armchair in front of Mr. D., its head bent slightly forward, its long limbs poised on the armrests with something akin to melancholy. There was, too, the customary blankness of expression, the slight pause before responding to verbal statements, that familiar lack that Mr. D. could never put his finger on. But there was something else, too . . . something he had never sensed in a cyborg before.

"You were very kind to bring her back. You must be programmed for helpcare."

"No. I had been talking to her in the bar. About you. And the Bio-warehouse."

A chill went through Mr. D., the sort of chill that made him feel he had a body again.

The cyborg folded his hands, in an almost meditative fashion.

"Yes," the thing continued, "she was very curious about it, as I informed her that I had been working in the K-sector warehouse for the past few months. About the sort of work I was doing . . . the doubts I had. She was a very good listener. I was explaining to her how I have not been the same since . . . since . . ."

And his voice trailed off. Very uncharacteristic, thought Mr. D. Vagueness, indecision, was not in their programming. Stopping, the thing turned its head toward Mr. D., the two red diodes glowing eerily in the darkness.

"What sort of work do you do?" asked Mr. D., breaking the silence.

"I chart histories, record lives. Tel, Ltd. constructed our line specifically to perform this function. To be quite honest, our line has not had a glowing performance record. Many of us have had breakdowns, anomalies. It's likely due to the organic component in our design, integrated into our brain complex in order to fully activate the linguistic and temporal sense functions. Time travel has been especially problematic and disruptive. In my case . . ."

"Time travel!" Mr. D. interjected, having no idea that the experiments of Tel, Ltd. in this area had borne fruit.

You will again note, gentlemen and brothers, how indiscreet the meta-scribe has been in this instance. Yet another example of the security risk in devising this line at all, and of the whole project of resurrecting the outmoded discipline of History. Time travel shall, in future, be restricted to the N3Z series, which

has had a heretofore unbroken security record.

I am deeply concerned, however, that such a measure is now pointless. The proverbial cat is, so to speak, out of the bag.

The cyborg nodded.

"Time travel has been achieved, though it is still in the experimental stage. Since my last assignment, which sent me back in the early part of this century, I have been unable to perform my functions properly, and I have been ordered to de-activate for examination. But I disobeyed, escaped to the Droidzone."

Again, the cyborg turned his head, and stared at Mr. D. Somehow sadness, mourning poured through his blank expression.

"Disobeyed? How—"

"I know, it is not possible. Yet it happened. I have been analyzing the fact for some time. I was in the bar in the Droidzone, "mulling it over", as one says. That was when your wife sat down. When she talked about you, it was then that I knew."

"Knew? Knew what?"

"That something had drawn us together. When she began to talk about you, I was sure of it. You see, the last subject of my investigation was Hiram D., the novelist of early in the last century."

Mr. D.'s face dropped as the surprise ran through him.

"You mean, my great grandfather?"

The cyborg nodded, the diodes seeming to flicker a little.

"I can tell you more, but first you must come with me to the bio-warehouse. There is someone there who might be able to help you—and perhaps me."

Mr. D. cast an agonized glance down at the still form of his wife on the oval couch, breathing lightly with one delicate hand laid across her chest. Nearly instantaneously, he came to a decision.

Before he left, carried in a custom tote under the arm of the melancholy cyborg, he told Haas to inform his wife where he had gone.

Only moments after he was safely past the Bio-warehouse security under the arm of the cyborg, Mr. D. felt a gob of spit strike him on the back of his head. No only was it an enormous quantity of liquid, but it had travelled right through the grating of the tote.

The cyborg, whom he had come to know as Lint, looked up at the towering row of cyberlid modules, and seemed to cock his ear at the sound of laughter echoing high above.

A thick, gravelly voice then called from an enormous height: "Tell that prick he won't last for long in this place—not with me here!"

A thick, gravelly voice then called from an enormous height: 'Tell that prick he won't last for long in this place—not with me here!'

"Do not be alarmed," whispered Lint to Mr. D. in a reassuring voice, "it is the customary hazing ritual. The ruffian will be located and dealt with harshly. I had hoped to avoid this by bringing you here at night. It appears, however, the cyberlid gangs have sentries posted at night, to keep watch while the others sleep."

Turning his head to look up again, Lint cried in a loud voice: "Your behaviour and module location have been noted," and then walked on.

As they quickly passed rows of sleeping cyberlids, Mr. D. glimpsed some who were awake, one or two with fearful or confused expressions on their faces, others looking tired or anxious. After a seemingly endless trek through the sinuous avenues which snaked through block after block of cyberlid modules, they arrived at a door to a long hallway. At the end of the hall was a laboratory where a very old, grey-haired man in a white lab coat was lying in a hammock in a corner of the large room. The lab was cluttered with equipment, beakers and cages with animals, as well as viewing screens and several operating tables. Beside the old man, attending to him, was a Dwarfeen servant, who turned and looked with somnolently dull eyes at the two who had entered.

"Lint, for God's sake," said the grey-haired man, rising from his hammock. The diminutive, pale green Dwarfeen unsmilingly took a glass from his hand and slowly ambled across the laboratory to head out the door. "I thought you weren't coming back."

Lint paused before he answered.

"I could not abandon you . . .and upon reflection, I saw that you were right. I can no longer continue working for Tel, Ltd."

A smile broke across the old man's face and he reached out to grasp Lint by the hand.

"And I have found someone . . . a cyberlid who needs us as much as we need him."

"Does he know the risk?"

Lint paused and looked down, and waited until he saw a nod from Mr. D.

"He knows."

"Then let us begin. Time is short," the old man said, rising with difficulty from his hammock to extend two thin bandy legs onto the floor. "The corporation is now aware of my presence in this sector and have placed their security forces on alert."

And as they headed to the operating table, Mr. D. said a mental goodbye to Delia.

You are aware by now, my brothers, that the senile, long-elusive Dr. Hughes-LeBlanc did not escape as he had planned. It was clever of him to use a free cyberlid to exercise his plan—since those in the warehouse are outfitted with fail-safe surveillance chips. But he forgot one thing—the Dwarfeen servant, which he was foolish enough to consider a friend. Though the meta-scribe known as Lint has escaped with the cyberlid, Hughes-LeBlanc has been apprehended and terminated immediately. All records have been destroyed.

Anyway, the report includes a suspicious denouement, which, in my opinion, is to be interpreted as a gesture of defiance from our rogue meta-scribe, who suggests, if only between the lines with the disrespectful, ironic tone of his report, that his researches into History will continue.

Let it be so. Even time itself will not hide him from us.

Signed,
Kremm (Chief Minister, Tel, Ltd.)

She hadn't heard from you, sir, and became distraught. She put me on a timed shutdown, and when I came back on, she had done it."

As he looked down at the blue-white form that once was Delia, Mr. D. lis-

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tened distractedly to Haas's clipped, neutral-toned words. He had longed for so many months to put his hand on her, to feel her hair and her breasts. And now that he could touch her again, it was only to feel her cold, lifeless flesh.

"Did she know that I could not communicate with her, that I was in hiding?"

"No, sir. She only said that she couldn't bear the thought of you still alive in the bio-warehouses. And when she made inquiries, there was no information on you. It seemed like you had vanished."

After a pause, Haas added, "I can assure you, sir, if it is any consolation, that it was a quick and painless death. She chose her poison well."

"That's good, Haas, that make's me feel much better," said Mr. D. without smiling.

Weeks after the operation, he still felt like a rider in a carriage, the hand seeming like someone else's. But hour by hour, he felt closer and closer, more intimately entwined with it and the rest of this alien body. And though he thought he could never get used to the too vibrant mechanical thrum! of his synthetic heart, or to the too perfect drumbeat of blood surging through the industrial-strength veins, he sensed a deep well of emotion, and perhaps even a soul, slowly forming, gestating in the midst of that heart.

And Lint? How did he feel when the unfamiliar tide of grief and pain began to flow through his body, and tear at the limbs that were no longer his alone? As he knelt down beside the body of this woman he had known only briefly, it was with new eyes.

As he began, following a strange, insistent impulse, to kiss the cold blue hand, and tears rolled down over his soft fleshy cheeks to cover the stiff fingers pressed against his lips, he looked at a woman whose former life he now knew with the intimacy of a lover.

And then, with the dawn just breaking, he left his house with the woman on his back, and stepped out into the quiet street.

"Time enough, now," he murmured, "Time enough."

And he disappeared, weeping, into the streets of the endless city.

☆

The things you do to get and keep a job

The Interview

Story by
Gary J. Langguth
Art by
Robert Pasternak

La-Qui dashed through the tunnel at break-neck speed, shoved one arm into his black jacket, tried to find the other arm, failed, and prayed that his 6:75 appointment would be late.

The tunnel was no place to dress and he knew it long before the empty sleeve of his jacket snagged on a sensor plate and sent him reeling head-first against the rusty metal wall. Bright lights danced before his eyes as he sank to the floor.

Bloody plates, he muttered as he hauled himself to his feet. He tugged the sleeve free and examined the stretched fibres. They had been spun from fine black flexichromene and at the time of purchase had been proclaimed Highest Quality by The Network.

Unfortunately, the jacket had been purchased six cycles ago. And it was now his only jacket.

He eyed his scratched wrist chronex.

6:90.

He shoved his other arm into the jacket and bolted into the shadows.

The tunnel stretched for miles, dank, poorly lit, and lined with sensor plates and strands of braided chromene cable. It reminded him of the cross-section of a vein from an android he'd once caught on The Network.

The tunnel dipped slightly beneath the centre of Los Angeles Crater, then began to rise. He wondered whether the neons would be working along Flux Points 92 and 93. San Andreas shifted constantly, severing power to various sectors of the California-Pacific tunnelwork with surprising regularity, and when he reached Flux Point 93, sections of tunnel lining had indeed shifted, allowing a thin stream of Lake Hollywood to spray the interior. But the neons continued to shine and La-Qui ran the rest of the way without incident.

He reached Nicole Junction 27, darted up the stone steps, and halted before the oval airlock to his office chambers. He inspected the airlock s two adjoining plates of six-inch chromene. They had been dented in several spots by a string of promising candidates.

He checked the tunnel carefully — he had been jumped once by an early appointment and almost lost his personal digicard in the struggle — but he found no one in sight. Satisfied, he removed the digicard from his jacket and fed it into the lockslot. The lockslot pinged in recognition, then spat the digicard back out. He snatched it and hit the green pressure point above the lockslot.

The plates easily slid apart.

Almost too easily, he thought.

The hair on his neck bristled. His chambers were a mass of shadows. He groped for the illumination panel and brushed something silky, cool, metallic. Clothing. He threw a punch, missed, threw another, and hit the illumination panel instead. As the first warm rays of amber filtered down through the illuminite crystals, he discovered that he had taken several swings at his only dress tie.

This would not do.

He needed to be calm and focused for the interview.

One more hire, he thought. Just one more and he'd have his quota for the cycle.

La-Qui took a deep breath, exhaled, took another, then pulled the tie from its float-hanger and pressed it to his neck. He waited until the fibres bonded with his collar, then checked his wrist chronex.

7:09.

He shook his head.

His stomach growled for supper, but he was bound to wait a tenth longer. Simple employer courtesy (and the terms of his agreement with the Corporation) demanded it.

He tapped a button on the hanger and an oval mirror spun into view. He inspected three cycles worth of candidate abuse: the faint scar at the corner of his lip where his very first appointment had sliced him with a hot twining wand; the mark on his chin where

Dormise Gamblen kicked him last cycle; the bruised eye from his recent meeting with Fennel McSwaggart. His forehead was scraped, too, from the accident in the tunnel.

Three cycles.

He was some sort of walking miracle. No one had ever lasted in the position as long as he had. Everyone else from his squad at the Academy had been either killed or permanently disabled long ago.

He wiped the sweat and grime from his forehead, applied a bit of tint to the eye and the scrape, then smoothed his greying hair.

There, he said at last. Presentable.

But even with the tint, he still looked twenty-four cycles.

And nobody in his position had ever seen twenty-five.

The young ones always asked him why he continued, why he came home broken, bruised, and bleeding each night. He tried to explain to them the concept of Employment Well-Fare Benefits, but they could not yet grasp the importance of health insurance plans.

They hated the anti-radiant drugs and the periodic gene and chromosomal therapy sessions and didn't understand that without them, The Plague would claim both them and their father as it had claimed his own father and his father before him.

So many had given their lives in service to the Corporation.

He sighed.

One item was missing from the reflection.

His Corporate ID pin waited on the float-hanger. He fingered it carefully. Its blue neon proclaimed:

La-Qui Bennett
Employee Recruitment
Specialist - Level One

He stared into the mirror for a long time, then sank into his contour couch and hit the infra-red panel. The Network Video on the wall twinkled to life.

Oh, to have natural immunity! To survive without a job! To be able to take what he wanted when he wanted it! Oh, to be a free agent!

But there was no immunity and no cure. Not for him, for Naia, or for their young ones. There were only the regular interviews and the therapy sessions.

There was no alternative.

La-Qui picked up the pin and pressed it to his jacket.

He stared into the mirror for a long time, then sank into his contour couch and hit the infra-red panel. The Network Video on the wall twinkled to life.

Corel Disnei Windsor was summarizing the work period's news: . . . and despite recent advances in the reproductive sector and regular media conception campaigns, the birth rate continues to decline. The reproductive Earth population currently stands at two million.

A shadow fell across Corel's polished scalp, and when a hairy muscled arm closed around his neck, La-Qui realized his appointment had most certainly been punctual.

"Guess who, pretty boy!"

The voice was deep, hoarse, and full of wicked humour.

La-Qui clawed for freedom until the visitor grabbed his left arm and yanked it back.

He felt the bones snap.

"Guess who!"

The vice-like grip tightened.

"Monterey," gasped La-Qui. "Monterey St. Orlando, I presume?"

The vice opened and La-Qui gulped air — until he was lifted from the couch by the back of his jacket, whisked across the chambers, and slammed against the stone wall.

"You got that right, pretty boy."

La-Qui s head throbbed. Darkness swirled from the corners of his eyes. When he next heard Monterey s voice it was as if from a great distance.

"What's your handle?"

La-Qui Bennett, he whispered as he fought to keep his eyes open. "I'm . . . I'm very pleased . . . to meet you."

Monterey laughed. "So I hit the right chambers."

La-Qui noticed a scarlet smudge on the wall and knew he had to take control of the situation quickly. "Won't you . . . sit down. I have . . . refreshment."

"Don't mind if I do," Monterey replied, and with that, he threw La-Qui across the room.

La-Qui landed hard on his oval float-table. He wiped his nose, then rose on his good arm to see his latest appointment.

An imposing figure came into focus. Monterey St. Orlando was easily eight feet — tall, even for a surface-dweller — and colourful, too. Braided black hair. Neon orange shades.

Black flexichromene jacket. Steel breast-plates. Plenty of heavy gold chains. La-Qui guessed he was nineteen, maybe twenty cycles at most.

"I'll have a double Bronx, no ice," said Monterey as he settled onto the couch. "And make it snappy."

La-Qui nodded and rolled off the table with great difficulty. It hurt to breathe. He guessed a broken rib or two.

He staggered across the room to the silver float-tray, found a Bronx spray nozzle, and filled two bronzed goblets with sparkling crimson. He picked up one of the goblets and handed it to Monterey, who downed it in one long, loud gulp.

"Another," he said.

"Of course," replied La-Qui and he brought him the second drink.

Blondie was Louise Kenmore Santiago, Monitor Liaison for Los Angeles Shaft Entry Point 9. Her shaft-traps — simple float-trays of raw meats placed at surface level over unstable sand-covered shaft lids — could always be counted upon to obtain fresh candidates.

"Yes," said Monterey when he was finished, "That really greases the works! Now cut to the vein. Blondie mentioned a job."

Blondie was Louise Kenmore Santiago, Monitor Liaison for Los Angeles Shaft Entry Point 9. Her shaft-traps — simple float-trays of raw meats placed at surface level over unstable sand-covered shaft lids — could always be counted upon to obtain fresh candidates.

"You're being hired by The Great Corporation. That is, the Corporation for General Reduction of Earth's Atmospheric Toxicity. Your position will be that of Atmospheric Filtration Operator — Level One. To cut to the vein, you will be responsible for the operation of an automatic atmospheric filter at surface level in Point Pasadena."

"I waited two fucking tenths in that fucking decontaminant chamber for this?"

"Monterey, our bio-scans indicate you are completely immune to all known surface radiants. Your genetic codes provide excellent references, the kind of references we need — "

"You want references? Check these."

La-Qui felt the blood drain from him. Monterey was on his feet now. He held a twining wand in one hand and a three-pronged field fork in the other.

In a heart beat, Monterey crossed the room, grabbed La-Qui by the throat and drove him against the wall. He brought the fork to his cheek. At close range, La-Qui saw that its prongs were finely serrated.

"Listen, pretty boy," growled Monterey. "I'm not going to stand around and watch some fucking fan."

"But —!"

"I don t want your fucking job," he hissed. I don t need your fucking job. I just want to get back to the surface. Show me the fucking way. Now."

"Monterey, please!"

"You fucking fool!"

La-Qui felt the prongs slice his cheek. Warm red trickled down his face.

"Oh, Monterey, I beg you! Think of the benefits!"

The fork paused.

"Benefits?"

"Oh yes, Monterey! Benefits! An automated sustenance system, just for you! Think of it: no more hunting and scavenging for food! Regular meals!

You're being hired by The Great Corporation. That is, the Corporation for General Reduction of Earth's Atmospheric Toxicity.

Think about it!"

Monterey lifted the fork.

"Yes, Monterey! When you want a meal, you don t wander about and hope for a stray dog or a sleeping old raider. You earn your meal. And when you want it, just press a key and presto! Roasted pigeon. Or beef liver. Or a leg of chicken, Monterey. Baked in its own juices!"

"Okay," Monterey said at last. "How much a fucking cycle? And it better be fucking good, or I'll rip your fucking throat out."

La-Qui s first thought was seven hundred and thirty meal rations per cycle. Two meals per period. But Monterey pressed the fork to his throat. "Eleven hundred rations per cycle."

Monterey smirked. "Eleven-fifty."

La-Qui hesitated and the prongs gently stroked his Adam s apple.

"Fine! Fine!"

"And the hours?"

"Six hours per work period, from 2:50 to 8:50. Nine work periods. Every tenth period is free."

"Listen, pretty boy: I work five hours, 3:75 to 8:75. Eight work periods. Every ninth and tenth period is free."

"This," said La-Qui, "is quite acceptable."

Silence.

La-Qui stared into the shades, but saw only his own fear reflected.

Monterey nodded, then released him.

La-Qui dropped to the stone floor. He lay there, trembling, and watched his latest hire head for the airlock.

Monterey struck the pressure point with his fork.

The plates slid open easily.

He paused, however, to pick something off the floor.

"So we have a deal," said Monterey. As he stepped through the airlock, he waved La-Qui's personal digicard. "I will seal it with your wife. I hope she is pretty."

"She . . . she is, "whispered La-Qui, still trembling. Welcome to The Corporation."

☆

Does death have to mean the end?

Lifeafter

Story by
David Chato

It is true what they say. At the moment of death you do see your life play out before your eyes. At least, it was true for me. I had seen it. But not in a flash.

I will try to explain.

For weeks, I had been lying weak in a hospital bed, struggling for each breath, a drug-induced haze battling to hide the pain. A fifty-two year old woman facing the end, living out the final stages of my life. This was death, and so be it. We all die eventually, in our own personal way. I had said my good-byes long ago.

And now what? The haze was gone. I felt strong yet was unable to move, unable even to open my eyes. Something had changed.

Memories were with me, available in every detail. All I had to do was remember. Even memories from my childhood were as clear as if they had happened yesterday. I recalled them and watched them with all their scenery, sounds and smells. But they didn't flash by. They played before my mind's eye in an unreal time and were clear, like some other-world, moving-picture show.

What had happened?

"You are safe," a voice said. A strange voice, with its words multiplied by a reassuring quality in its tone. "You will get stronger and soon you will be up. I will answer your questions when you recover."

Recover?

I relaxed and fell back into comforting childhood thoughts. Springtime. Warm sunshine. Earthy smells. My father's crocuses pushing through the remaining snow on our garden back home. I stopped to look at the flowers in their purple and yellow show. I was seven again, with strong legs and lungs and unmeasured energy. The memory covered me.

A smile formed. I could feel the muscles in my face stretch dry lips. My hand came up and touched warm, soft skin. The smile was real, and as I felt it, every nerve serving the sensation of touch came alive. The garden memory faded. Still I could not open my eyes.

The voice spoke again. "Your paralysis is slowly subsiding. You should be able to use your arms and hands now, your legs as well. Flex your toes. Rotate your ankles. Make small movements."

"M . . . my eyes," I said.

My lungs filled and exhaled with the words. The air tasted sweet.

"Sight will be the final sense to return. You will be up and walking soon. I know you have many questions, and I am here to answer them as best I can. Speak slowly," the voice said.

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"Where am I?" I said. "The last thing I remember was lying in a hospital bed . . . dying. I feel different."

Was this heaven?

"You are on a world, a long distance from your home," the voice answered. "The body which you used in your lifetime has died and remains behind, completing the cycle of life as it is understood by your species. Your . . . person, your thoughts, experiences and memories, everything you acquired while living, have been brought here."

My unasked question. "Is this heaven?"

"We don't fulfil the promises of heaven as you might define it. However, other visitors from your world maintain their faiths and prefer to accept what has happened to them as a station on the way to another existence. If it comforts you to believe, we cannot deny you that. It is up to you."

Slowly the mist was changing into other colours. Emerging from it were outlines of a side table, a window, walls, a door, all the things I remembered last seeing in my hospital room.

The question remained unanswered. I had never committed myself to any faith. It was a strange irony that even after death, I still wouldn't know.

"I feel . . . wonderful, healthy again. I was sick for so long. So tired when I had to return to the hospital for the last time." I felt my strength returning. My knees ached to bend. "Now everything seems to be working again."

"Your host body will give you all the sensations you expect and all the facility you need to interact with others during your visit with us. You should be able to walk in a few moments."

"My host body?"

"Yes. Your host is an exact duplicate of your original body, regenerated from the DNA code which was transcribed when we brought you here. It is an ideal, physical model of what you might have been, had you not become ill. It seems perfect, but it is not without compromise. Are you ready to open your eyes?"

My eyes. I had almost forgotten.

"Before I do, what is your name? Who are you?" I asked.

"We call ourself the Connai. My name is Drayan. I will be your guide during your visit."

I slowly opened my eyes. A soft, featureless, rose-coloured mist filled my view. No ceiling, no walls or solid surface of any kind. I blinked once and turned my head as far as I could. There beside me, sat a young man.

"Drayan?" I said. "You look so . . . normal."

"Welcome." He kneeled down beside me. "In your mind, we have taken on a human appearance. We use your language and expressions to communicate. To other visitors, I reflect the appearance of their species and use their sounds. It helps everyone adjust during their stay here."

I swung my legs over to one side and noticed the edge of my bed. Slowly the mist was changing into other colours. Emerging from it were outlines of a side table, a window, walls, a door, all the things I remembered last seeing in my hospital room. I looked around as they slowly appeared.

"This all looks identical to my old hospital room."

There, as expected, was the closet beside another door leading to a small washroom. "My clothes, are they here? Can I get dressed?"

"They are, and yes, of course." Drayan walked to the door which should have lead to the hospital corridor. He opened it slightly, and bright white light seeped in. "Please take your time, and call for me when you are finished. We can start then." he said and left the room.

I got up quickly. I could not remember a time when I felt so strong. Everything worked with dexterity and balance. The pain, the blurred vision, the limited movement had all disappeared. I took a few steps toward the closet.

On the wall was a mirror. I remembered how in the original hospital room it had become a curse, giving me a day by day account of my steady decline. Now, instead of a reflection of my diseased and decrepit body, there was a new image. I stood looking at myself in late middle age, greying hair cropped short against a tanned, wrinkled face. Clear, light green eyes staring back. This

was me as I should have been, a healthy, older woman. I brought my hand up and touched the mirror. It was no dream.

I dressed and called for Drayan.

"Drayan, I don't know how or why you've brought me here but . . . thank you. You mentioned I am a visitor?"

"Yes. Let us walk. We can talk as we go," he said and swung the door fully open.

We stepped out together into a small courtyard. There was a cultivated garden surrounded on all sides by low walls made of cut stone. It seemed familiar. I closed my eyes and recalled a favourite quadrangle at the college I had attended when I was young. The memory fit perfectly with the apparent reality.

Drayan began to explain.

"We Connai are explorers. We have a need to learn, to understand others and their cultures. You are here to help us see your world through your memories. Think of this as a school and yourself as a teacher."

"What could you possibly learn from me? "

"All that you know, every memory which you built during your lifetime, everything that produced the person you were. We have found the best way to understand a world is to listen to stories from the people who have lived in it."

"Are there others here from my home?"

"Many. A representative group is perpetually here from your world. Other planets and civilisations as well. You will meet many of them during your stay."

"Why not visit us, come to our world?" I asked.

"It is not possible to study a civilisation first hand without influencing it in some way. We cannot presume our visits would be welcome or that our presence would have a positive effect. Our ability to bring the essence of lives here, lets us learn about other worlds without the problems associated with making actual, physical contact."

We continued walking and left the courtyard through an arched opening in the wall. I began to notice others strolling the grassy rolls of the landscape. There were beings, human in form but with strange, distinctive features. And everywhere in groups of various sizes, gathered around the visitors, were the Connai, listening intently to the stories of their guests.

I turned back to Drayan.

"You say we are visitors. What happens to us after we have finished our visit?"

"You will be with us for one year. Others will arrive and depart during your stay. You will notice them come and go." Drayan paused. "Knowledge is a fluid thing and the pursuit of it is a constant endeavour. Things change on the worlds we have chosen to explore. If we are going to maintain our understanding, we must have new teachers. The total number of visitors here is the only constant."

"And after the year is over, Drayan?" I asked again.

"What we do is difficult to accept by some. Please try to understand that there is no real life for you here on this world. You cannot grow older, and you cannot acquire new knowledge. You can only recount and tell us what you know.

"I mentioned that there is a compromise with the physical form you are occupying. Your host body is temporary. After one year it will cease to function. All that you have imparted, however, will continue on, distributed in the collective knowledge of the Connai."

"And I will finally die?"

"Not entirely," he said.

"But there is nothing else. What remains after the body is gone and I have been . . . distributed?"

"Some believe what is left is the most important part, the essence of a life lived. This, we cannot keep. We give it back. It becomes a gift in kind for what we have secretly acquired." Drayan stood looking directly at me.

"My soul, Drayan?"

"Some call it that. Soul, essence, spirit. Whatever the word, it comprises the qualities which grew from what you experienced while living. A very valuable and worthy gift to return."

"But where does it go? How is it received when you send it back?"

"We do not know. With the technology we use, we have never been able to understand this essence or soul. We only know that it remains as the balance to life after everything else has ended."

I thought again about heaven. Perhaps wherever this final part of me was to end up, would provide the answer. But I would never know.

I sat down beneath a tree. Two other Connai joined us and sat down in front of me.

"What would you like to know?" I asked them.

One of them spoke. "Tell us about times which made you happy."

The question stirred some favourite memories. "Well, how do I start?"

"Close your eyes and describe what you see," Drayan said.

I did so and began telling them the stories of my life.

I closed my eyes and recalled a favourite quadrangle at the college I had attended when I was young. The memory fit perfectly with the apparent reality.

☆ ☆ ☆

It had been more than a year since his grandmother had died. The seven-year-old boy walked from his bus stop, pushing a stick along the sidewalk through the slushy remnants of winter. School was going well. He had overheard his mother talking with a teacher about his exceptional abilities in a range of subjects. He was well-liked by many friends and well-loved by his parents.

The boy approached his home on the quiet, older street. His mother waited by the front door. He stopped to notice bright colours appearing through the dark mud of the front garden. His mother watched from their porch as he slowly walked up to the colours.

"Mom, what kind of flowers are these?" he called to her, pointing at the bright yellow and purple.

"Crocuses dear, the first flowers of spring. We put the bulbs in last fall, remember?"

"I feel like . . . I've seen them before," he said and bent over to take a long, close look.

☆

Queen of Pern

Anne McCaffrey has spent almost 30 years telling the story of dragons and their riders, now she watches another of her projects take flight

By
JAMES BOUTILIER

Today, you'd be hard pressed to find anyone interested in fantasy or science-fiction who hasn't read, or at least heard of, Dragon Riders of Pern.

With 14 books in the "Dragon Riders" series, along with her latest, Dragonseye, Anne McCaffrey can be called a legend.

Along with "Pern", McCaffrey has also written forty other novels and 54 short stories crossing many genres including romance.

Born on April 1, 1926 in Massachusetts, McCaffrey graduated with a degree in Slavonic languages and literature. Has she ever found a use for that degree?

"I can cuss you out in Russian!"

She actually started her entertainment career, not as a writer, but as a stage actress and opera director.

In fact, it wasn't until her children were comfortably in school that, at the age of 41, McCaffrey had her first novel, Restoree published (Ballantine Books, 1967).

The rest is history!

Now living in Wicklow County, Ireland, in a personally designed home called "Dragonhold-Underhill," McCaffrey amiably discusses her three-plus decades of writing.

Just how does someone born in Massachusetts end up in Ireland?

"Well, it was 3,000 miles away from my ex-husband, ha!"

For those who have never talked with McCaffrey before, a word of caution is advised. McCaffrey comes off rather sarcastic and self-assured, but taken with a spoon of sugar, she is fairly laid-back and carefree, and besides, she has an incredible history of published works.

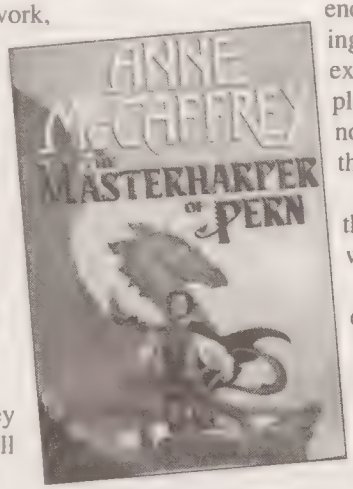
> "I got so fed up with the way women were being portrayed in science fiction that I came up with a story where it was the women who had all the information."

Even while in college, McCaffrey was interested in writing, even to the point of

"I start a novel with a situation and character involvement by creating a viable conflict...I never write an outline, I make it up as I go along."

distraction, as she admits, "I was writing in Latin class when I should have been listening to the teacher!"

But it wasn't until 1967 that her first novel, Restoree was published. Unlike much of her whimsical work, McCaffrey wrote this novel as a commentary on the misrepresentation of women.



"I got so fed up with the way women were being portrayed in science fiction that I came up with a story where it was the women who had all the information. Ha, ha!"

Before this, McCaffrey had been doing fairly well writing short stories, the first of which was published in Science Fiction Plus Magazine, and was soon able to devote herself to writing full-time.

McCaffrey created a world in "Pern" that has become a legend.

With 14 novels, Dragonrider role-playing games, computer games and now a feature Dragonriders of Pern movie coming out, is she surprised that the series would make her world famous decades later?

" Yes I am! It started out as a short story!"

If we could all be so lucky. Just how did McCaffrey come up with the story? Well, it was nothing spectacular, in fact, the whole idea came from working on another story. "I was searching around for a new critter for a new story, and I thought about dragons."

There is one point she is certain of, and that is that she does not want religion in "Pern!"

Why you ask? This is solely McCaffrey's point of view.

"Honey, look around at the headlines. Why should I inflict religion on another planet!"

We all know the basic story, a legend of dragonriders, of course. When asked to give a short explanation of her world in her own words, McCaffrey wasn't too enthusiastic.

"No, ha! ha! You're talking 14 books, over two million words."

However, she did give a brief overview, simple as it may be.

"World is in danger, world is saved by dragons, dragons are ridden by people, ultimately dragon riders save world."

Although many fondly refer to McCaffrey as the grandmother of science-fiction/ fantasy writing, she does not agree, exactly. "Oh, no. There are plenty of others." Maybe not of her caliber? "Sure there are."

Well, she can't argue the fact there is no other with her, endurance.

"Well, maybe not endurance, ha, ha!" Vonda McIntyre of Star Trek acclaim is in McCaffrey's opinion, a better writer: She does write a great Star Trek novel.

If there was one way to describe McCaffrey it would be that she is rather laid-back, just like her approach to writing.

Although many writers stand by the story board version of novel writing, where an outline is created to layout where special events occur, McCaffrey simply gets an idea and writes.

"I start a novel with a situation and character involvement by creating a viable conflict . . . I never write an outline, I make it up as I go along."

Again, McCaffrey's approach seems simple enough, even where her story influences are concerned.

When asked if, like many authors, she

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draws influence from her environment, she simply replied, "No."

Writing about dragons, and living in Ireland in a home called Dragonhold, one would have thought it would have presented some color. Wrong again. So, what motivates McCaffrey to write? "I want to tell a story . . . (and) to make money, you know."

McCaffrey has written many novels and short stories, and sometimes, even she doesn't know which a particular story is going to be.

"I start out knowing I have people interested in a situation, a story to tell."

Although she prefers to write novels, Anne enjoys the concentration of a short story, as she puts it, "You can pack a lot in!"

What is the difference between writing a short story as opposed to approaching a novel?

According to McCaffrey, "You can put more in a novel. Ha, ha!

Well, all this fame bound to get McCaffrey invited to conventions, which in the past she was frequently attended.

She admits to having a good time at conventions but prefers the ones the Irish hold. Why? "There's more space. In the US they think (the fans) that because they read your book they own you. Some tag along and you can't get rid of them, you know, the slimy ones.

"Unfortunately, it's the slimy ones you remember, ha, ha!"

This seems a strange statement when you consider that science fiction is considered kids books there.

According to McCaffrey, "I'm known more for my stables. I'm considered a writer of children's books because I write science fiction."

For all the Dragonriders of Pern fans, there is more planned for the future.

McCaffrey may be 70 years old, but she is doing more at her age than many young writers can only dream of.

Believe it or not, she is even writing the movie version of Dragonriders of Pern!

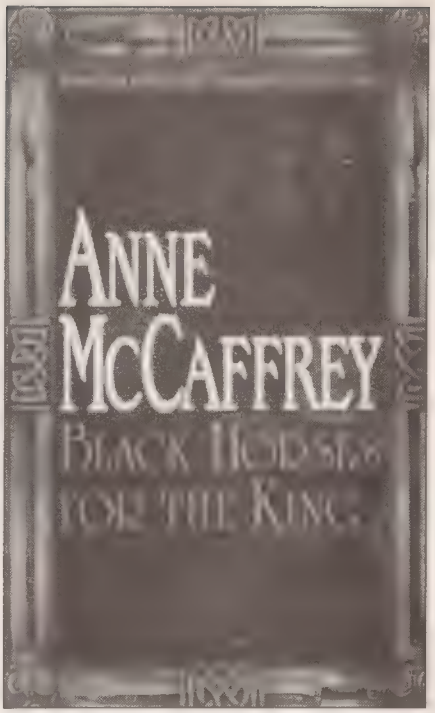
It has been rumoured for some time, but is finally happening. Why now?

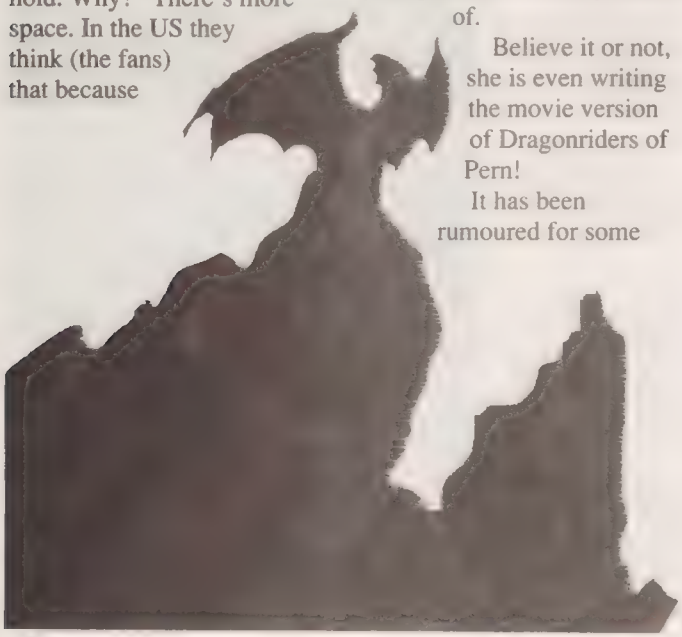
Of this McCaffrey is certain, "Now that I'm involved and not some #$@ down in Hollywood."

So, after more than 40 years of writing, what keeps the science fiction novels coming?

"(In science fiction) I have so much freedom. I can write what I want!" ☆

"I'm known more for my stables. I'm considered a writer of children's books because I write science fiction."





Pern set for '99 production

Toronto-based Atlantis Communications is teaming up with Zyntopo Productions of Dublin to develop Anne McCaffrey's Dragonriders of Pern ™ , a new sci-fi action hour based on her series of internationally bestselling novels.

The two companies intend to ready the television drama series for production in 1999. ATLANTIS is the worldwide distributor of the series.

"The series is wonderful storytelling, with great potential for many seasons. The Dragonriders of Pern™ will require cutting edge animation to realize the story's dragons and effects," said Atlantis Chairman and chief executive officer Michael MacMillan in a release. "Atlantis has been successful in combining live-action and special effects on programs such as Gene Roddenberry's Earth: Final Conflict. In fact, much like our series Gene Roddenberry's Earth: Final Conflict", we see McCaffrey's Dragonriders of Pern as a terrific opportunity to create a long-lasting series with significant franchise quality that can translate to other media."

☆

Clive Barker

Even when he breaks virgin ground with the historical epic, Galilee, Barker still allows his trademark style to show through

By
CHRIS KREJLGAARD

When it comes to fantasy and horror, there is bizarre and then there is Clive Barker — his work, not him.

Over the course of his career, he has produced 19 novels, memorable films such as Hellraiser and Candyman (as well as some not so memorable ones such as Lord of Illusions) and has gained a measure of renown as a painter.

Through it all, Barker remains a storyteller.

"All of the media in which I work are outgrowths of a desire to tell a story," he says.

Since his younger days, Barker has relished the power that he felt simply telling a story to his younger brother Roy.

"In the telling of stories, I realized that I could generate excitement; I could make him cry; I could make him laugh; I could do things to somebody else's mind," he recalls. "Whether your writing or painting, it all comes down to a question of 'so what happens next?'."

Next for Barker is Galilee (HarperCollins). The novel is a departure of a sort from his usual fare. Of course, the same could be said of the children's books he has penned in the past.

"Why does any writer or filmmaker or painter decide to go into some new place?" Barker asked rhetorically. "I guess it is because your imagination leads you that way.

"I've pretty much done this my entire career."

Galilee is a sizeable tome that falls into the romantic epic category.

This is not to say that the novel is a straight-forward work. Barker's works are seldom that easy.

"In one sense, Galilee is the bringing together of many strands of material (from his other novels.)"

The novel follows the path of one of America's most influential families. Patterned after families such as the Kennedys, the Gettys and the Rockefellers, the Gearys sit at the pinnacle of power and influence.

The Gearys' fate becomes intertwined with that of Barbarossas family — a family with a mysterious past.

Photo courtesy of HarperCollins

Clive Barker has had a resounding amount of success in any endeavour he has undertaken since Hellraiser and Pinhead arrived on the scene. Now he hopes Galilee keeps the string alive.

Galilee is a member of the Barbarossa clan and is the son of two supernatural beings — a twist on the traditional romantic epic. But it is also a twist that is inherent to Barker's work.

"Everybody has their voice," Barker says of the characteristic view in his novels and films. "The Barker voice is kind of twisted, my sense that I want to turn things a little round, to put a half spin on things, serves a purpose."

That purpose, he explains, is to get readers/viewers to admit that they have some "weird sh--" in themselves and experience a sort of a cathartic episode.

Despite the fantastic underpinnings of Galilee (a reference

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to a region of Isreal that was considered less sacred than other districts in the region), Barker conducted many months of research in an effort to couch the novel in surrounding the U.S. Civil War and the dynasties of America.

Barker spent time in the American south travelling to Charleston, S.Ca., as well as to battlefields.

"It was an educative thing for me to research the area of American wealth," the Liverpool native explained. "And learn how often great American wealth is rooted in rather unsavory deeds."

But Galilee also goes beyond a simple tale of two families or the acquisition of wealth. It, like most of Barker's other works, deal with the shadings of characters.

"After you live in the skins of the characters for a while, you start to get a sense of the ambiguity," Barker explains. "The characters lead me into more complicated things. I think human beings are always more complicated than they appear on first blush.

"So often popular cinema, and popular novels, are divided rather crudely into the bad and the good. And the truth is all of us, practically all of us, live inside of a more ambiguous area."

"The heroes are often less heroic, the villains often have their reasons."

This point shows the strength of the written word over film, according to Barker. Movies, for various reasons, seldom allow viewers to see the dark side of the hero or the light side of the villain.

"So often popular cinema, and popular novels, are divided rather crudely into the bad and the good. And the truth is all of us, practically all of us, live inside of a more ambiguous area." he said. "And in that ambiguous area are some of the more interesting things we do."

It is this area that Barker likes to explore when he is working his mastery.

Galilee represents the first time that Barker has written a novel in the first person. Through the novel, he takes on the skin of Maddox, the book's narrator who tries to put together the pieces of the two families' history for the reader.

"There is a lot of elements of me in Maddox," Barker said. "I took great pleasure in mind melding with Maddox and discovering that I had, through him, a chance to speak my own anxieties."

And with a sequel to Galilee planned, there will be another chance for his anxieties to be voiced and brought out of the

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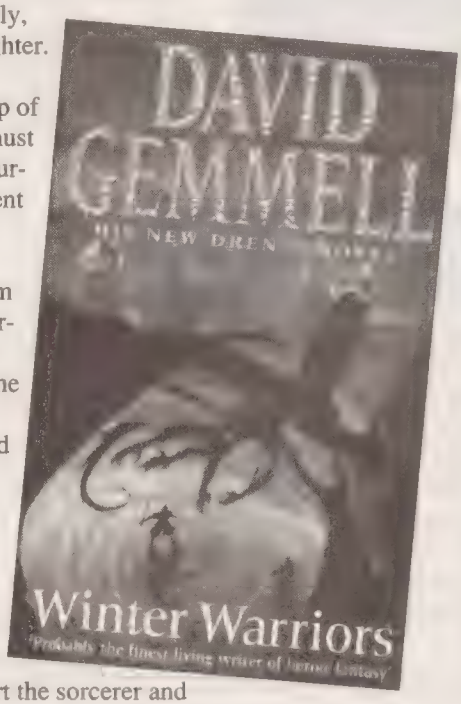
Gemmell continues his mastery

There are novelists whose work you want to read. There are also novelist whose work you have to read. It is rare when a novelist is both.

British author David Gemmell is that rarity.

In Winter Warriors (Doubleday — paperback), Gemmell continues the compelling storytelling that was present in earlier works such as the Jerusalem Man series and, more recently, Ironhand's Daughter.



In Winter Warriors, a group of aging warriors must interrupt their journey into retirement to protect their queen and her unborn baby from demons and a sorcerer who wants the baby so that he can reopen the gates to the world where demons had been banished eons earlier.

Along the way, enemies become allies in the fight to thwart the sorcerer and his army. There are also the trademark surprises that Gemmell places at crucial moments in his novels. Of course, there is also the careful plotting of the piece that ensures that the reader keeps turning the pages. There are no weak spots that allow the reader to wander off.

Gemmell is the master of the epic fantasy.

While his plots are relatively basic, Gemmell's strength lies in his ability to make the reader make an emotional investment in the hero and his allies. A reader feels a profound sense of sorrow when one of the hardy band dies or when a hero is called upon to make the supreme sacrifice. A victory on the battlefield almost makes the reader want to join in the cheers with the rest of the warriors.

Winter Warriors is true-to-form work from Gemmell and, unlike the works of many other authors, it keeps your appetite whet for more.

— Lars Johansen

☆ ☆ ☆

Blue Limbo

I first read Terence M. Green's Blue Limbo (Tor Books/H.B. Fenn) in its shorter version in the Ark of Ice anthology edited by Lesley Choyce.

I was impressed with it then. I am even more impressed with the expanded version. Taking a short work and turning it into a novel doesn't always work. Often the padding is too obvious in the longer form.

But not this time.

Green has combined the best elements of sf and Joseph Wambaugh's style of the police procedural into a fast-paced near-future treatment of the search for justice and meaning, in both the physical and metaphysical senses of the words.

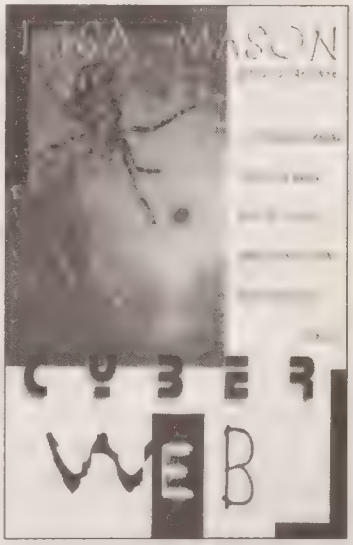
It's also a damned good read.

— Gregg Chamberlain

☆ ☆ ☆

Cyber Web

It would be so easy to dismiss Lisa Mason's Cyber Web (Avon Eos) as just another cyberpunk novel. These novels are, thanks to the new mainstream awareness of the Internet and its related technology, becoming a dime a dozen. That is, until you read Cyber Web.



The novel is a fast-paced futuristic thriller that takes place in a post-earthquake San Francisco. It encompasses elements of the cyberworld, New Ageism and a violent corporate philosophy.

Cyber Web is one of those few-and-far-between novels that has the reader muttering "Dang," when the final page is turned.

— Chris Krejlgaard

☆ ☆ ☆

Elf Fantastic

So far I haven't hit a clinker yet in Martin H. Greenberg's latest Fantastic anthology edition, Elf Fantastic (DAW). I would like to give a tip of the hat to the two Canadian selections dealing with new renditions and interpretations of the Good Folk.

The Law of Man by Michelle West is an excellent tragic depiction of why humanity and elvenkind remain apart from each other and may always remain so. Though it does contain a seed of hope in the end that some kind of meeting of the ways may be possible through the power of the heart.

A Midsummer Night's Dream Team proves once more that Tanya Huff will always deliver when it comes to

innovative and entertaining stories that are just a little bit off-centre. She also manages to slip in jokes that will leave Canadian readers smiling and everyone else scratching their heads.

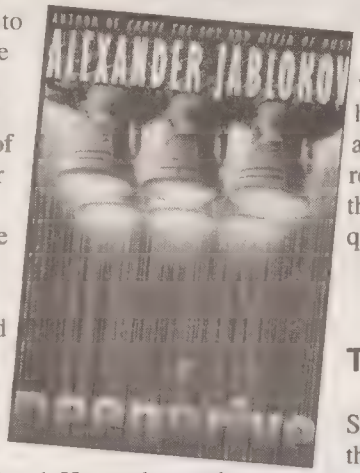
— Gregg Chamberlain

☆ ☆ ☆

Deepdrive

In Alexander Jablokov's latest novel, Deepdrive (Avon Eos) a band of mercenaries are sent to Venus in the hopes that they will be able to salvage an intergalactic engine from a downed alien space craft.

In the 21st century, man is relegated to second-class status in the solar system because humanity lacks a faster-than-light engine to power his ships. Eleven alien civilizations have used the engines to settle the planets and the moons of the solar system.



These drives are designed to self-destruct after the voyage is completed. Hence the need to salvage the engine from the downed ship. If this were a simple space opera, Deepdrive wouldn't be worth the price of admission.

But Jablokov, as he has in earlier works Nimbus and Dust, textures his work in a masterful way. There are plenty of plot twists to keep the reader interested and characterization that makes the reader care about the quest.

— Chris Krejlgaard

☆ ☆ ☆

The Mandalorian Armor

OK, I admit it, I'm a sucker for Star Wars novels. For the literatzy, this admission is the same as admitting you're the product of a first-cousin marriage. It's the kind of atti-

Upcoming Releases

	A Knight of the Word; Terry Brooks; Random House Canada; HC; $36 Cdn;	**Aug/Sept**
	Nightsword; Margaret Weis & Tracy Hickman; Del Rey/Random House Canada; HC; $35 Cdn;	**Aug/Sept**
	Wit'ch Fire; James Clemens; Del Rey/Distican; SC; $19.50 Cdn;	**Aug/Sept**
	Newton's Canon; J. Gregory Keyes; Del Rey/Random House Canada; SC; $19.50	**Aug/Sept.**
	Bloom, Wil McCarthy; Del Rey/Random House Canada; HC; $33.50 Cdn	**September**
	Star Wars: Vision of the Future; Timothy Zahn; Bantam Spectra; HC; $32.95 Cdn.;	**September**
	Hearlight; Marion Zimmer Bradley; Tor Books/H.B. Fenn; HC; $35.95 Cdn;	**September**
	Tea From and Empty Cup; Pat Cadigan; Tor Books/H.B. Fenn; HC; $31.95 Cdn;	**October**
	Stinger; Nancy Kress; Tor Books/H.B. Fenn; HC;$34.95 Cdn;	**October**
	Babylon 5: Dark Gensis: J. Gregory Keyes; Del Rey/Random House Canada; PB; $6.99 Cdn	**October**
	Timecop: Viper's Spawn: John Thomas; Del Rey/Random House Canada; PB; $6.99 Cdn	**October**
	Big Rock Beat; George Kihn;Tor Books/H.B. Fenn; HC;$33.95 Cdn;	**October**
☆	**Legends**; ed. Robert Silverberg; Tor Books/H.B. Fenn; HC; $35.95 Cdn;	**October**
	Future on Ice; ed. Orson Scott Card; Tor Books/H.B. Fenn; HC; $34.95 Cdn;	**October**
	The Outlanders; David B. Coe; Tor Books/H.B. Fenn: HC; $37.95 Cdn;	**October**
	Zombie Lover; Piers Anthony; Tor Books/H.B. Fenn; HC; $35.95 Cdn;	**October**
	The Avram Davidson Treasury; ed. Robert Silverberg & Grania Davis Tor Books/H.B. Fenn; HC; $37.95 Cdn	**October**
	The Dragon in Lyonese; Gordon Dickson; Tor Books/H.B. Fenn; HC; $35.95 Cdn;	**October**
☆	**Starfarers**; Poul Anderson; Tor Books/H.B. Fenn; HC; $35.95 Cdn;	**November**
	Starlight 2; ed. Patrick Nielson Hayden; Tor Books/H.B. Fenn; HC; $34.95 Cdn;	**November**
	Playing God; Sarah Zettel; Warner Aspect/Distican; HC; $27.00	**November**
	The One-Armed Queen; Jane Yolen; Tor Books/H.B. Fenn; HC; $33.95 Cdn;	**November**
	Dragon; Steven Burst; Tor Books/H.B. Fenn; HC; $31.95 Cdn;	**November**
	Skins of Dead Men; Dean Ing; Tor Books/H.B. Fenn; HC; $34.95 Cdn;	**November**
	The Barrens and Others; Tor Books/H.B. Fenn; HC; $34.95 Cdn;	**December**
	The High House, James Stoddard, Warner Aspect, PB; $8.50 Cdn;	**December**

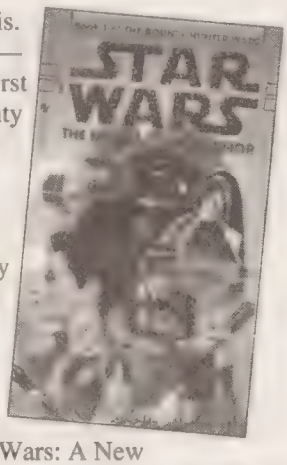
☆ *Reviewed this issue*

Price is suggested retail, price may vary

Shipping dates may change

tude that results in such elitists missing out on some fine fiction.

The Mandalorian Armor (Bantam Spectra) is an example of this.



The novel — which is the first part of a Bounty Hunter Wars series — follows Bobba Fett as he battles the Bounty Hunters Guild and Prince Xizor's unknowing henchmen just after Star Wars: A New Hope. Juxta-positioning with these events are the efforts of Dengar and a dancing girl from Jabba the Hutt's palace to rescue and restore Fett after his escape from the Great Pit of Carkoon.

K.W. Jeter, whose Blade Runner novel is also a fine complement to that movie, captures the essence of the Star Wars universe and of its characters — they function in the novel just as fans of the movies would expect them to.

As a set-up piece for the series, The Mandalorian Armor is perfectly-crafted. It ends with, well lets just say that it will make readers salivate for the second installment.

Planet of Twilight

As good as The Mandalorian Armor is, that's how disappointing Planet of Twilight (Bantam Spectra) is.

In the book, Luke and Leia travel to a small Force-sensitive planet — Leia is kidnapped and taken there by power-made rulers, while Luke is there to find his lost love.

The plot, while holding a great deal of promise (especially the thought of a controlled plague ravaging the Rebel forces), is mired in a mish-mash of sub-plots and down-right poor writing. Author Barbara Hambly, while packing a considerable writing resume, walks through this effort as though the landscape was scarcely worth her notice.

Han, Chewie and Lando are relegated to supporting cast status — they seem more an afterthought that a viable part of the plot. And because of this, Hambly's understanding of the characters and the Star Wars universe could easily be questioned.

Other Star Wars stuff

Del Rey offers up an exhaustive look at the Star Wars universe with the Star Wars Encyclopedia.

The book contains entries for all the known (and not-so-well-known) members of Star Wars. Planets, characters, equipment and other aspects of the movies, comics and novels.

The listings are well-researched and the book is well-illustrated.

The same cannot be said for Del Rey's latest in its guide to Star Wars with The Essential Guide to Planets and Moons. The entries in this book are cursory at best and the artwork is strictly your basic comic book variety.

— Lars Johansen

☆ ☆ ☆

Legends

This book contains the Dream Team of science fiction, fantasy and horror.

Legends (Tor/H.B. Fenn) offers readers a chance to read Terry Pratchett and his Disc World in the same book as Orson Scott Card's Alvin Journeyman and as Anne McCaffrey's Pern and Robert Silverberg's Majipoor.

Silverberg, who served as the anthology's editor, has assembled a cast of heavyweights whose creations are legendary.

If your looking for a sampler of the various flavours and nuances of science fiction and fantasy, this is it.

— Angus MacKay

☆ ☆ ☆

Starfarers

Poul Anderson has long been considered a visionary and a profound thinker when it comes to man's journey into the stars. Starfarer's (Tor/H.B. Fenn) will not endanger that reputation. It will, if anything, only enhance it.

In the novel, a group of scientists must travel 60,000 light years to make contact with an advanced civilization that has been detected by the SETI system.

Anderson, in his typical fashion, not only has his characters face the unknown at the edge of the galaxy, but also the changes that have occurred on Earth since they left. This novel commands the reader's attention and leaves them with some heady questions when the story has concluded.

— Angus MacKay

In Paperback

Avon

The Searchers, Chet Williamson

Avon Eos

Cyber Web, Lisa Mason
Days of Cain, J.R. Dunn
Donner Jack,
Roger Zelazny & Jane Lindskold
Einstein's Bridge, John Cramer
The Family Tree, Sherri S. Tepper
Grail, Steven R. Lawhead
Jupiter Project, Gregory Benford
Mother of Plenty, Colin Greenland
Night of Glory, Scott Ciencin
The Physiognomy, Jeffrey Ford
Semper Mars, Ian Douglas
Twice Seven, Ben Bova

Bantam Spectra

Dreaming in Smoke, Tricia Sullivan
The Fey, Kristine Katryn
The Red Wyvern; Katharine Kerr
Vast, Linda Nagata

Bantam

Aliens Berserker, S.D. Perry
Clones, John Whitman
Ironhand's Daughter
David Gemmell
Legacy of the Darksword,
Margaret Weiss & Tracy Hickman
The Maldorian Armor, K.W. Jeter
Planet of Twilight, Barbara Hambley
The Rise of Endymion,
Dan Simmons
Spectre of the Past, Timothy Zahn
Time Beyond Beginning,
W. Sarabande
The White Tribunal, Paula Volsky
X-Wing 6: Iron Fist, Aaron Allston

Del Rey

Black Horses For the King,
Anne McCaffrey
Running With the Demons,
Terry Brooks
The Subtle Knife, Philip Pullman

Doubleday

Winter Warriors, David Gemmell

When is a lot of gaming too much?

There are a lot worse hobbies to take up, just don't let it take over the rest of your life

GAMING NOTES

By
JUSTIN MOHAREB

Editor's note: This is a rant

First off, a small rebuttal to the letter of a few months past.

This is a column. In it, a columnist (i.e. me) presents his views and opinions on the topic of the column (i.e. role-playing games and anything related to them). It is not a forum for pointless name dropping.

While it's perfectly nice that one of Karl Wus supplements sold a lot, I don't care. I was just rattling off the names of a couple writers whose work I've enjoyed. As well, while it's fascinating to know that Columbia Games may have been located in Canada at one point, thats pretty much irrelevant.

Parts of Alaska used to be in Canada, too.

So, in summary, I appreciate feedback. I prefer it have something to do with what I'm saying here, and not be pointless pedantry.

Thank you.

Editor's note: Rant's over

Now, on with this issue's column. I want to take a look at how much gaming is enough. How often should you play? Does having a free time schedule heavy on the RPGs make you a bad person?

Gaming's a hobby, right?

It's something we do for fun. We do it to relax, to stretch our creative legs, to get out of our mundane lives and go stroll around a neighbourhood that's a little more dangerous than our own (without the risk of getting shot).

But when is gaming too big a chunk of your life? Is there such a thing as too much?

I'll just say to start that it's very easy to be a lurker gamer (i.e. a gamer who doesn't actually play anything right now), so it's very hard to not have enough gaming in your life. But that'll come up later.

I know a lot of gamers (I think they may take up too high a percentage of my People-I-Know list, to be deadly honest). I know people who game almost every night. I know people who schedule stuff around their games, like dates, meeting family, work, and other games. I know people who like to do temp work because it lets them have time to game. I know one guy who left his brother's wedding reception early because he had a LARP to get to.

I also dont think there's anything wrong with any of that.

I mean, aside from the occasional Vampire game where someone with a too soft grounding in reality decides they're gonna go hunting fer people, gaming in excess isn't dangerous. At worst, it is an indication of too narrow a focus in your life (you'll forgive me if I don't go for the don't have a life joke; glass houses and all that).

Sure, it's bad if you let it take over your life, allowing your family, relationships, and work to suffer. But that's the way it is with any hobby, whether its gaming or golf. I don't know if it's just an example of an addictive personality

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(it can't be worse than, say, cigarettes) or what, but someone who lets anything take control of their life should take a quick priority check, or maybe a trip to their local mental health specialist.

I know it is possible to game too much; I've known people to flunk out of school because their hobbies took too much time in their life.

Gaming is only a hobby.

And, while I can't see why someone would game as much as some people I know do, I can't see why they shouldn't. IF they don't let it hurt the other aspects of their lives (I'll say it again; school, work and family are way up there compared to any hobby), they should go for the gusto. Personally, gaming isn't a very big priority in my life right now. I still get a fair number of game books, but thats mostly to read.

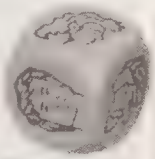
My record for actual gaming was twice a week for a few months when I was in school part-time and working part-time. I was well and truly happy with that I mean, while it's not the best hobby in the world for you, there are a lot worse.

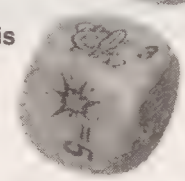
It's more social and mentally engaging than watching TV (yes, even the Golf Channel).

I've never known a person to be coerced into playing an RPG. Neither have I ever known someone to play if they didn't want to (either joining a long-term game or playing in one-night sessions). So I'm assuming that the people who play games for hours on end do so because they enjoy it. I mean, if you're feeling burnt out in a game, there's no reason not to just give it up for a while.

So, if you game a fair bit, there's nothing wrong with it. Every person's limit with gaming should be an individual thing, just like with everything else.

Tune in next column for a review of Jovian Chronicles by Dream Pod 9. And other stuff.





❑ Justin Mohareb is madly in love with Valerie Gibson, but realizes that columnists just

Sinful Stars anthology set for release

Holistic Design will release its first Fading Suns short story anthology in October.

The Sinful Stars: Tales of the Fading Suns. provides an introduction to the Fading Suns universe. According to a press release, The Sinful Stars provides in-depth details of the far future for readers, sci-fi fans, gamemasters and players alike.

The anthology is based on a single premise.

It is the dawn of the sixth millenium and the stars are seen to fade The world of the Fading Suns is revealed in the tales of its people: priests, nobles, guildsmembers, aliens and peasants.

This short story anthology reveals: The quest of an Ukar for an ancient relic of his race's mythology — a crown that can bend time itself; a priest finds absolution from his tortured sins in the storms of Pentateuch, the Planet of Mysteries; a low-ranking noblewoman dares a joust of words with the cunning Decados to find the truth behind her betrothed husband's death; a scientist studying nanotech ressurects an evil from the time of the Second Republic.

These stories and more, show the tumultuous fate of humankind four millenia from now.

The suggested retail price is $15.95 (US).

Read the Bitter Guide to Science Fiction and Fantasy at http://www.connect.ab.ca/~garyh/cansfrg/columns/bg/. **Edition six is now out. Read it, if you want to see the girl alive again.**

Gaming News

New Fading Suns due out in 1999

Holistic Design Inc., creator of the Fading Suns roleplaying game and Emperor of the Fading Suns computer game, announced that it has reached an agreenment with Ripcord Games to develop a Fading Suns computer game, tentatively titled "Fading Suns: Starship Diplomacy."

The Fading Suns universe was first released in 1996. Set in the Dark Ages of the sixth millennium, it features feuding nobles, powerful priests, scheming merchants, oppressed aliens and a universe on the verge of a new Renaissance — or a complete collapse.

Starship Diplomacy, due out in 1999, features intense space combat, extensive exploration options and a detailed diplomacy and economic engines of any real-time strategy game.

Destroy America, be a star

Avalon Hills Games has announced the release of Monsters Ravage America!

The object of the game is to become King of the Giant Monsters. Each player controls one giant monster and one branch of the U.S. Armed Services. As a monster, you want to destroy cities, landmarks, and military bases in America. The more cities you crush, the stronger you become. As a military commander, you want to protect cities and your bases from other players' monsters — or better yet — capture a monster and send it to Hollywood where it will star in B movies until it breaks free.

X-Wing sets standard for space simms

The X-Wing Collection is the perfect way for newcomers to get acquainted with space-based games

OP 1: Destroy Imperial Convoy
Imperial FRTs
Bellalt
The attack against an Imperial Convoy has turned up a surprise!
Page 1 of 3

By
GREG VAILLANCOURT

Space simulator games in general tend to follow the same principle, make it fun, fast, furious, pretty and make it feel as if you're there — just like the Death Star sequence in Return Of The Jedi.

Nobody does it better than LucasArts.

The X-Wing Collection contains X-Wing, Tie Fighter, and 14 out of the 50 total missions of X-Wing vs. Tie Fighter (a kind of demo to encourage you to go out and buy the game), all souped up with patches and 3D support.

Since the time that each of these games was initially released, many faster, prettier, flashier games have come along. Despite this, some of the most fun to be had in space sims is in this collection.

If you're looking for a space combat simulator to have some fun with, there isn't a better choice overall than the X-Wing Collection.

Each of the three games has its own installation, so if you choose to play them in any order, or if you want to do them one at a time, you can.

The games themselves have been spruced up with all of the latest revisions (patches) and 3D-video card acceleration is now supported.

Other than that, there are no changes to the games, so those that already have at least one of these titles shouldn't bother unless you're feeling nostalgic. For those people who haven't tried any of the games yet, this is probably the best introduction to space simulators you will find.

The following summary of how the games play is for the rookies.

Artwork courtesy of and © LucasArts

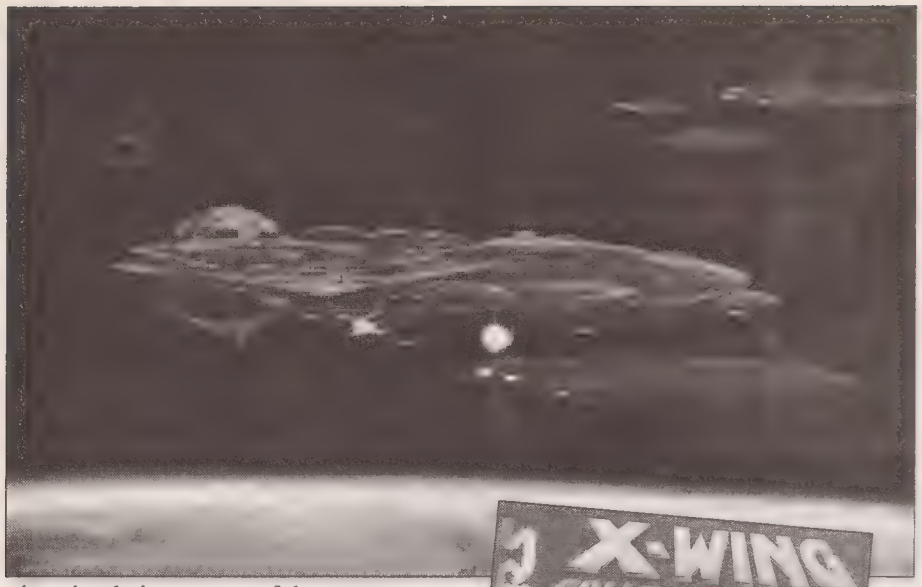
Admiral Ackbar sends you on your mission. Will it be to destroy an Imperial convoy or engage a squadron of Tie fighters? The X-Wing Collection contains 50 missions for novice and experienced pilots.

First off, you should definitely read the manual thoroughly before you jump into the game. Since this is a space simulator, there are a lot of controls you have to learn before you can begin flying (weapons, targeting, acceleration, maneuvers, etc.).

Once you have the basic controls figured out, you are going to need a good joystick with at least four buttons and hopefully many more with full programmability. It is a definite plus to playing the game if you can do so without looking down at the keyboard to perform the commands, losing valuable time and breaking your rhythm.

Once you have an idea of how to control each of the ships you may be flying, you may proceed to one of the games. The game interface is roughly the same in all three games. You start off on a large capital ship with a droid prompting you to register your name as a pilot so that you may access the space port.

Once registered, you have access to many doors (areas) including training, historical mis-



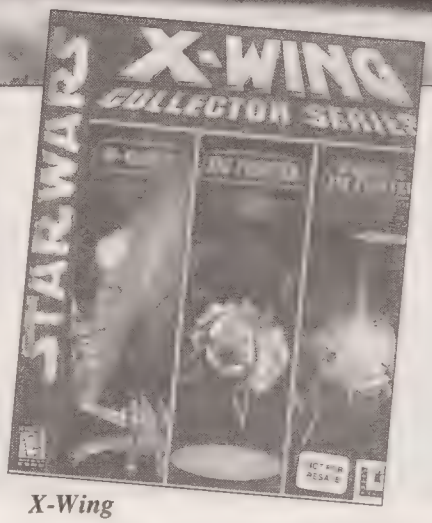
sion simulations, tours of duty or campaigns, the film room where you can review your mission performance from different perspectives as through a VCR tape and the tech room where you can check specific details on weapons layout, top speed and all of the fine details of your own and your opponents' ships.

Depending on what you choose and how well you do, tracking of your mission success and the medals won, end up in your pilot log.

Once you start to get into each of the games and notice the differences between flying for the rebels and the Empire, cruising in a X-Wing or Tie Fighter, you will really appreciate how stimulating space combat can be. I would recommend a Logitech Wingman Extreme Digital, CH Flightstick Pro, Thrustmaster Top Gun, Jane's Combat Stick or a Suncom F-15E as a good controller for this and for your future flight simulator games.

If there is a persistent problem with the collection, it is that some of the missions may seem impossible to finish because you are required to accomplish all objectives, a near impossibility in some missions. Over time, as you get to be a better pilot you may end up solving the problem if you can get used to doing some missions four or five times. Once you do complete these near impossible missions, the tremendous sense of accomplishment is rewarding.

By the way, if you really like the series, you should seriously consider picking up the full version of X-Wing vs Tie Fighter for a great multi-player experience.



X-Wing ***Collector Series*** *system requirements are as follows: Windows 95 required, Windows 98 compatible, Pentium 90 or faster required, Pentium 133 recommended, Pentium 100 required for Multiplayer, 16 MB RAM required, 2X CD ROM required, 4X CD ROM recommended, 100 per cent DirectX Compatible PCI graphics card required, 100% DirectX Compatible 16-bit sound card required, Joystick required. Microsoft DirectX 5.2 is included on the CDs and must be installed to play.*

X-Wing Collector Series *optional system requirements are as follows: 3D-Acceleration supported through Direct3D with most major 3D-accelerator cards.*

For X-Wing vs Tie Fighter: Flight School *the following are multiplayer details: Local Area Network; supports up to 8 players via IPX, Modem To Modem; supports 2 players via 14.4 Kbps or faster, Direct Serial; supports 2 players via null modem cable.*

❑ Greg Vaillancourt is a Sudbury-based computer junkie and writer.

Software Plug-ins

Anticipated game now available

Fans can now satiate their thrist for battle. iMage Sudios of Austin, Tx., has announced that its latest title. **Ares Rising** is now available to the public.

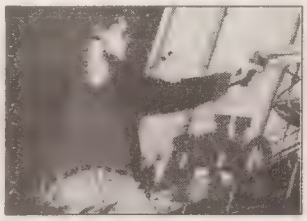
In this space-combat game, players can create their own character and set personal goals for the game. Prior to each mission, the player must equip his ship and determine his or her battle plans and strategies for the game ahead. It even gives you the option of turning down a mission — wuss.

The game, which carries a $29.95 (US) price tag, is available on the Internet at **http://www.imaginestudios.com**

Agreement paves way for interactive label

Platinum Studios has signed an agreement with Barry Friedman Enterprises Inc..to create an interactive label.

Under the agreement. Friedman Enterprises will have exclusive interactive representation of the Platinium Studio's comic book properties. Company officials say the deal will open up a wide range of opportunities for such properties as **Cowboys & Aliens** and **Dylan Dog**.



Dylan Dog

Platinum Studios also announced the appointment of Bill Kunkel as director of interactive development and Paul Benjamin as manager of creative affairs. While he worked at Warner Brothers, Benjamin worked with its consumer products division on licensed merchandise for Looney Tunes and Space Jam.

WELCOME TO THE MAINFRAME

REBOOT: ODDESSY TOWARD ANIMATION'S FUTURE

By
GREGG CHAMBERLAIN

You need an electronic card key to get to the heart of Mainframe, the digital city which is home to Bob, Dot, Enzo, Megabyte and all the other characters that inhabit the computer-generated world of ReBoot. It's appropriate for, and also typical of, Mainframe Entertainment Inc., a company which is always working to stay at the cutting edge of computer animation.

Behind the electronically-locked doors, animation design and editing studios occupy one of the two floors that comprise Mainframe Entertainment's Howe Street suite of offices.

Animators sit tapping fingers against keyboards in thought as they study story sequences running across desktop computer screens. In other rooms, groups of men and women stand or sit at desks, tossing around ideas and kibitzing. The walls are covered with sf/fantasy or cartoon posters and every table top has its collection of action figures, dinosaur skeleton models and starships. All symbolic of what ReBoot executive producer Chris Brough says is Mainframe Entertainment's goal.

"We like to make the impossible possible," Brough explained, sitting behind his own paper and memo-cluttered desk in an office which overlooks Vancouver's central business district. "We love it when people say 'It can't be done'."

Brough and the rest of the people at Mainframe enjoy the creative challenge the world of ReBoot offers.

Their success at making that challenge pay off shows in that the computer-animated series is seen in more than 50 countries and has spun off more than 80 licensed products ranging from the standard action figures and fast-food-joint giveaways to kids underwear, adult drinking mugs, interactive games and home videos.

A few years ago, Brough observed, the entire staff and production facilities of Mainframe could have fit inside a hotel room. Now the company occupies two floors of an office building and seeks more room for its ever-expanding operations.

"We've come a long way and we can go a lot further," Brough said. "We love what we do. It keeps us young. Me, I'm a 12-year-old locked in a 48-year-old body."

The first all-computer-generated animated series, ReBoot is the brainchild of the the British creative collective known as The Hub: John Grace, Ian Pearson, Gavin Blair and Phil Mitchell.

Pearson's and Blair's background includes creating the first CGI characters ever seen by most television viewers for the Dire Straits music video "Money For Nothing," while Mitchell has won awards for his work on television commercials.

ReBoot itself was conceived about a decade ago. Pearson, Blair and Mitchell made the jump to Vancouver to ensure their creation became a reality according to their design. Grace stayed in England to work on other projects.

The first episodes of the series debuted to audiences in Canada and the United States. in September 1994.

Since then ReBoot has won

Geminis for best animated series and outstanding technical achievement and also received the Alliance for Children and Television's award of excellence as best animated program.

Mainframe Entertainment has added another feature to its CGI lineup, by breathing new life into the old Transformers cartoons with its three-dimensional computer-animated Beasties series (aired on U.S. channels under the name of Beast Wars).

Meanwhile, ReBoot, introduced new characters and concepts and deleting (maybe) old ones when it entered its third season. That also makes the series stand out among the rest of the animated offerings available on television. Most cartoon series last for a single season before getting shelved. Exceptional ones may stretch out a second year of new episodes, but few ever break the two-season barrier. The electronic life of a cartoon character is very short, with the exception of Batman and Superman, who keep getting revived every few years, and Warner Brothers characters who live on in reruns everywhere.

"There are a number of (animated) shows that continue," Brough observed. "ReBoot is one of those.

"ReBoot Three, though, is a major departure from the past two seasons. We are going into the Web, which is sort of its (Mainframe City) down side.

"It's sort of an Odyssey, really."

While core characters survive the Web storyline, Brough didn't rule out the chance that ReBoot fans will see somebody get "nullified."

"I think you will see some births and some deaths and some reincarnations in the season."

Which may be part of the reason for ReBoot's success. Brough lists three strengths of the series.

"First is compelling imagery never seen before. Second is a very unique framework due to the technology. It's a bit like Gulliver's Travels on the Internet.

"Third is storytelling. We have very warm and compelling characters and very accessible storylines.

"I can give you a lot of movies that looked great but didn't do well at the box office. Content is key. Without that glue that holds everything together, you've got nothing. Just eye candy."

Too often, Brough observed, people who produce shows, whether live-action or animated, tend to ignore the need for good stories. The successes in the business don't just rely on trendy concepts.

"One of the real time-tested examples of this is Disney which is really story-intensive. One of the keys to their success is their excellent storytelling and finely crafted scripts. I think we could all learn from this." Brough said

ReBoot remains fresh because the storylines make use of the physical, psychological and emotional dimensions of the characters, forcing them to act and react to new situations.

"Our characters will grow and get older. Our audience will grow with them. The audience likes to grow with its favourite characters.

"There are many episodes of ReBoot that reveal themselves upon repeated viewing. There is a sense of continual discovery. That's why we don't cut corners." Brough cited M.A.S.H. and All in the Family as examples of live-action shows with the same quality of "contin-

Photo courtesy of and © Mainframe Entertainment Ltd.

One of the Vancouver-based company's other projects is an update of the popular Tranformer Series from the 1980s.

ual discovery" that the people at Mainframe try to instill in ReBoot.

"These shows run forever and you still laugh because it works. I'd like to think that we're doing the same thing."

Mainframe's animators and scripters also enjoy playing around with unusual storyline twists as shown by their second-season X-Files tribute in which Bob the Guardian program encountered C.G.I. special agents Fax Modem and Data Nully. Gillian Anderson even provided the voice for her digital counterpart.

"It was done in good humour, a loving tribute to a show that we're all very fond of," Brough said. He noted that after the episode aired, a flood of comments poured through the ReBoot web site on the internet, some from crossover viewers who watch both ReBoot and The X-Files.

ReBoot also provides an outlet for its creators to indulge in the Canadian pastime of perpetrating outrageous puns. Episodes like "Talent Night" and others offer lots of opportunities to introduce or inflict both verbal and visual groaners on unsuspecting viewers.

"We've got a couple of major punsters probably fleeing verbal imprisonment," Brough chuckled.

While "Talent Night" had a serious side in that it addressed the issue of censorship, especially in the United States, Mainframe's writers and animators still managed to "slip in a few zingers."

Where ReBoot's first strength computer imagery is concerned, Mainframe has its own research-and-development division which takes standard programming systems, refines them and then slips in the company's own programming design ideas. Also some of the advances in processor chip technology which the company has jumped on allow Mainframe animators to now see what their finished work looks like much sooner.

"We've kind of reinvented the technology," Brough said. "We almost edit in real-time."

When the series first began, production time for the computer-generated imagery involved six to seven days before the finished product was ready to view. Now it works out to about a day.

"We continue to break the envelope. Last year (1995) we produced more CGI than any other company in the world." Brough noted that the only way Mainframe can stay ahead of the competition is by always improving itself and never settling for short cuts in either animation technology or stories.

"When you cut corners, you end up with a deficient product. The audience is sensitive enough to realize this."

We keep trying to make the wheel rounder. I think we're getting closer to life-like motion.

ReBoot opened the door for general acceptance of CGI animation and prepared audiences for the movie, Toy Story.

Mainframe Entertainment has plans for a ReBoot: The Movie. Work on a script is in progress and director possibilities considered. Meanwhile the people at Mainframe continue to devote attention to their work on the television ReBoot, its new companion series, Beasties, and establishing what Brough describes as "a technological beach head" in the entertainment industry from their Vancouver headquarters.

"We feel we are on the cusp of a technological revolution."

Mainframe has created a huge "cyber backlot" of inventory characters that it can draw on not just for new storylines but also to create interactive games and other spinoff items, all from the same database used for creating ReBoot and all of it under the sole ownership and control of Mainframe Entertainment.

"We are creating a new paradigm from which we hope to expand into a number of related areas. It makes good business sense."

What is the next step for Mainframe Entertainment? Brough sees future CGI animation as becoming more intensive, more fluid.

"We keep trying to make the wheel rounder. I think we're getting closer to life-like motion."

The next significant breakthroughs may be in "improved facial architecture re-design" though Brough does not see CGI animation totally replacing traditional animation. He thinks there will always be a place for ink-and-paint and other animation forms. The main problem those styles face is the amount of time and money needed to produce quality cartoons and feature films using traditional animation techniques as compared to CGI.

There's another problem facing the field of traditional animation which Brough noted becomes more serious every year. A lot of "the real geniuses" of traditional animation are leaving the field, either through retirement or death, and their replacements either haven't developed or shown up yet.

"We are fortunate in that Chuck

ReBoot's executive producer, Chris Brough, sees a vast future for computer-aided animation.

Jones is still with us, but Art Babbit isn't," Brough observed.

He said the real challenge for traditional animation is getting back to the level of quality displayed in classic works such as Fantasia. One solution may be the merging of traditional and computer animation such as Disney has attempted in its feature film versions of Beauty and the Beast and The Hunchback of Notre Dame.

"The merger with technology is definitely in the future," Brough said. "We see a convergence." Mainframe's animators have kicked about the idea of merging live-action with their own production technology to try and create virtual reality sets.

Brough said the company has consulted with Doug Trumbull (Close Encounters of the Third Kind) and various movie studios about the possibilities. Brough compared what the IMAX theatre system, which may soon have a ReBoot episode, is to film today as an example of what the future of animation could be tomorrow.

"We're just touching the potential of what we can do." Brough said that Mainframe, despite all the advances in CGI animation it has made in the past, is still "at the toddler stage where we're beginning to explore the world around us."

In the end, Brough stressed, the secret to success still remains with the people sitting in front of the drafting tables or at the keyboards. Computers, like pens and paintbrushes, are only tools used to create the stories in someone's mind.

"I think one way in which computers are often misjudged is that a keyboard is only a brush or a pencil. It's an extension of a human being's imagination.

"The beauty is there is really no finite end to what our imaginations can do," Brough said. "There is also a huge responsibility in that gift that must not be abused."

Under what he calls his heading of "Defenders of Digital Democracy" Brough noted concerns raised in the news media about the possibility of digital altering of photos. He cautioned that society must be careful in its use of computer technology "lest history be rewritten by people who are less than responsible for their own motives."

On the positive side, Brough noted that ReBoot itself has helped create more interest in and acceptance of computer technology. Almost the same way that Jules Verne's scientific romances helped stimulate interest in science and technology during the Victorian era.

"He set up a dream architecture and blueprint for science to live up to." Brough thinks ReBoot can help do the same thing in its own digital way to make computers more "user friendly" to the T.V. viewing audience.

The faces of Bob, Dot and Megabyte are a familiar sight to anyone glancing at YTV ad displays at Vancouver's transit stations and ReBoot is popular among people who work and play in the area of computer technology.

"There's not a computer engineer or programmer that isn't aware of ReBoot," Brough said. "They tell me, 'You've made my job far easier.'

"ReBoot gives technology a face and a voice and makes it a little more accessible to people."

☆

Animated Shorts

Pocahontas II tops charts

Animated movies continue to do well at the video store.

Among the top ten selling videos, according to Video Business, you will find Pocahontas II: Journey to a New World, Todd McFarlane's Spawn 2, The Black Cauldron and An American Tail 2-Pack.

If we're just thinking about videos for kids (or the kid in all of us), then add Hercules, The Spirit of Mickey, Anastasia, The Little Mermaid Special Edition and Melody Time.

Tolkien headed for big screen

It was animation first, now it looks like the Lord of the Rings trilogy will be making it to the big screen as a live-action flick.

New Line Cinema has green-lighted the project that will see the Fellowship of the Rings, The Two Towers and The Return of the King hit theatres.

The tentative schedule would see the films released at Christmas 2000, Summer 2001 and Christmas 2001.

The cost? About $130 million.

Quest for Camelot released next month

Leading the pack of animated videos released for the Christmas season is Warner Home Video's Quest for Camelot.

The film, which by today's megabuck standards fared poorly at the theatre, follows the adventures of a young girl as she seeks the fabled castle of Camelot.

The movie features the voices of Gary Elwes (even when he's animated he's typecast), Don Rickles, Eric Idle (a two-headed dragon with their voices? Sounds like a winner to us) and Pierce Brosnan.

The street date for the video is Oct. 13.

Understatement Miyazaki's trademark

Messages abound in Japanese master's films, you're just not overwhelmed by them

By
EMRU TOWNSEND

Artwork courtesy of and © Studio Ghibli

Unlike Western animated adventures, those of Hayao Miyazaki are more subtle and lack the preachy quality that has become a trademark in animation during recent years.

As promised, in this issue I reveal the final two reasons why I think Hayao Miyazaki's films deserve the adoration heaped on them by Japanese animation fans.

Reason #3: Environmental messages that don't hurt.

I'm a firm believer in environmental issues, but I don't like most animated attempts at taking an environmental stance. They're heavy-handed and simplistic; more often than not, polluters, loggers, and miners are willfully evil, negligent, and greedy, while the common (non-evil) man is somehow completely removed from the issue, so long as he uses a recycling bin. And then there's . . . oh, don't get me started.

Miyazaki's approach — when he has an environmental message — changes from movie to movie.

Curiously, the simplest message—in 1988's Tonari no Totoro — is also the most subtle. Set in rural Japan in the 1950s, Totoro focuses on two girls, Mei and Satsuki, who discover several forest spirits, including the Totoro.

It's amazing; the three Totoro — even the big, burly one — are as cute as a room full of kittens, but they don't indulge in the saccharin preachiness of, say, the Care Bears. In fact, they don't speak at all. Nor do they tackle evil loggers, negligent polluters, or power-mad industrialists. What they do is, indirectly, teach the kids that if your respect the natural world and treat it with a little kindness, it will reward you.

In Princess Mononoke, his latest film (which will be distributed theatrically worldwide), things aren't quite so clear-cut. The movie puts forward a simple premise: as man grows, he consumes natural resources — which further enables him to grow. The question becomes one of balancing man's survival with the rest of the natural world, and Miyazaki offers no easy answers.

Reason #4: The movie drives the merchandise.

Artwork courtesy of and © Studio Ghibli

The cat-bus, a giant Cheshire cat-like means of transit for the mystical forest creatures, while Kiki's Delivery Service had the dryly sarcastic black cat, Jiji, all of these provide marketing fodder for the studio.

It's a fact of life that merchandising is how a studio makes money. This is equally true in Japan, as it is in the rest of the world. However, most feature animation made these days seems to be designed secondarily to the merchandise.

When was the last time you saw a Disney feature without a sidekick that could easily be made into a plush toy? (Hunchback of Notre Dame had no less than four: the three gargoyles and Esmeralda's goat.) It's pretty much a staple.

Ultimately this stifles innovation, as the movie's creators find their needs being sidelined by the marketers'.

One could argue that Miyazaki's films have had their share of merchandisable characters as well: Nausicaä's title character had a cute little "fox-squirrel" named Teto; Totoro had the three variously-sized Totoro and the cat-bus, a giant Cheshire cat-like means of transit for the mystical forest creatures; Kiki's Delivery Service had the dryly sarcastic black cat, Jiji.

However, the policy at Studio Ghibli is explicit: film production comes first, and merchandising possibilities come out of the films. Totoro's big fuzzy creatures are among the main characters of the movie; Teto and Jiji existed before the movie adaptations. Laputa: Castle in the Sky has no fuzzies at all.

In the next Animated Discussion, I'll wrap this up with a review of Kiki's Delivery Service, the first Miyazaki film to be released in North America by Disney.

❑ **Emru Townsend is an unabashed Miyazaki fan. You can contact him at emru@cam.org.**

"Secret Service agents are trained in 16 forms of karate, four forms of ju jitsu, and two forms of reggae impressionism."

— Agent Pim, — Johnny Bravo

Anime News

First prize winner released on video

Central Park Media has released an English-dubbed version of **Grave of the Fireflies.**

The film, which won top prize in both the Best Animated Features and the Rights of the Child categories at the 1994 Chicago International Children's Film Festival, tells the story of two orphaned children in post-war Japan.

The two discover that they live in a land that is unable to help them, so they are left to help themselves.

The film , called "elegiac and riveting" by the New York Times, carries a $29.95 (US) suggested retail price.

Anime pin-ups on CD-ROM

Software Sculptors has released **Anime Pin-Up Beauties**, a collection of more than 200 illustrations of anime women.

The CD-ROM offers such formats as on-screen slide shows and screen-savers. The images can be used as attachments to your email, for creating posters and stationery. The CD-ROM has a suggested retail price of $29.95 (US).

Rogue submarine on video

Following the tradition of live-action thrillers, Central Park Media has released **Silent Service**.

The video details the covert mission of Japan's first nuclear submarine. The video has a suggested retail price of $29.95 (US) subtitled.

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David Gerrold

David Gerrold. He's still the same Tribbles writer who also penned Chess with a Dragon and A Covenant of Justice among other things. All of his works, he said, deal with a love of life and the themes of responsibility for one's own life and the lives of others.

How this all ties in with parenting, Gerrold observed, is that he's always had the theoretical knowledge about concern, not only his own self but also for others. Now, though, as a father he really has to "walk the walk" when it comes to being truly concerned about the interests and welfare of another person.

Other people used to tell him that being a parent was different from being a non-parent—not just in the most obvious way—that there was an attitude adjustment.

Gerrold didn't believe that was true then but since Sean has become part of his life he realizes that, being a parent does make a person see from a different perspective.

In the end, Gerrold mused, parenting relates to his belief that the best writing is an expression of humanity. Both involve going from having a general concern about issues like pollution, species extinction, and the like to being focused on the specific needs and desires of a child growing up.

"If you're focused on saving one child, that makes all the difference.

"There's a Zen koan that no pebble takes responsibility for an avalanche. But if every pebble takes responsibility for being a pebble, there are no avalanches."

In between The Martian Child, his latest Chtorr novel, and other projects, Gerrold is also working with Telescene of Montreal on adapting his Starwolf books as a television series. The only thing needed now is a market for the series. Once that's firmed up, Gerrold expects to move back to Montreal, a city he once called home, so that he can be close to the project. He's written the first four of the first season's 22 episodes.

While he's looking forward to Starwolf: The Series going ahead, The Martian Child project is very much a personal quest for Gerrold. ☆

Fall Program Schedule

SPACE THE IMAGINATION STATION

Eastern Time	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	Pacific Time
6:00am	War of the Worlds					Space News.	Canadian	3:00am
6:30am.						Mys. Forces	Documen.	3:30am.
7:00am.	Prisoners of Gravity					Prisoners of Gravity		4:00 am
7:30am.	Dr. Who					Science Show		4:30am.
8:00am.	Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea					Conan	Dr. Who	5:00am.
8:30am.							Spec.	5:30am.
9:00am.	Lost in Space					Space	Program.	6:00am.
9:30am						Precinct		6:30am
10am	Star Trek					Star Trek		7:00am
10:30am								7:30am
11:00am	War of the Worlds					Space Above	Animation	8:00am
11:30am						And Beyond	Elec. Playgrd	8:30a.m
Noon	**Animation Action**					Alien Nation	Capt. Power	9:00am
12:30pm	Weird Science						Inv. Amenca	9:30am
1:00pm	Alfred Hitchcock Presents					Green Hornet	Twilight Zone	10.00am
1:30pm	Batman					Serials		10:30am
2:00pm	Time Tunnel					Movie	Movie	11:00am
2:30pm								11:30am
3:00pm	Conan	Space Above and Beyond	Beauty and the Beast	Green Hornet	Dark Skies			noon
3:30pm								12:30pm
4:00pm	Star Trek					Nowhere	Mys. Explain	1:00pm
4:30pm						Man	Animal X	1:30pm
5:00pm	Babylon 5					Alien	Space	2:00pm
5:30pm						Nation	Specials	2:30am
6:00pm	War of the Worlds					Sliders	Space	3:00pm
6:30pm							Island One	3:30pm
7:00pm	Alfred Hitchcock Presents					Men in Black	Raven	4:00pm
7:30pm	Weird Science					Inv. America		4:30pm
8:00pm	Space	Nowhere	Sliders	The Net	Sliders	The		5:00pm
8:30pm	Island One	Man				Crow	Movie	5:30pm
9:00pm	VR 5	American	First	Mortal	Movie	Movie		6:00pm
9:30pm		Gothic	Wave	Kombat				6:30pm
10:00pm	Deep Space Nine						Deep Space	7:00pm
10:30pm							Nine	7:30pm
11:00pm	X-Files					Movie	Movie	8:00pm
11:30pm								8:30pm
midnight								9:00pm
12:30am								9:30pm
1:00am	Movie	Movie	Movie	Movie	Movie	American	Raven	10:00pm
1:30am						Gothic		10:30pm
2:00am	X-Files					The	Time	11:00pm
2:30am						Crow	Tunnel	11:30pm
3:00am	Babylon 5					Space Above	Men in Black	midnight
3:30am						and Beyond	Dr. Who	12:30am
4:00am	Deep Space					Nowhere Man	Deep Space 9	1:00am
4:30am							- Next Gen.	1:30am
5:00am	X-Files					Star	Star	2:00am
5:30am						Trek	Trek	2:30am

Highlights

First Wave, a modern-day fugitive can save the world from a hostile takeover by aliens, if he can convince anyone. Wednesdays at 9 p.m.

Babylon 5, the hottest Sci•fi show going docks with Space. Premieres Sept, 14, and airs Monday — Friday at 5 p.m, 3:00 a.m.

American Gothic, small-town sheriff holds Trinity, S.C., in his sway Premieres Sept, 15, and airs Tuesdays at 9 p.m.

The Crow a musician returns from the dead to wreak havoc on the criminals who killed him. Premieres Sept. 26 at 8 p.m.

Highlander: The Raven Anageless warrior and an ex-cop begin dispensing their own brand of justice. Premieres Oct. 4 at 7 p.m.

"This was a Sly Stallone movie, so everyone goes on the cutting room floor. It doesn't matter who it is," MacInnes said, adding that other, more well-known members of the cast were also left on the cutting room floor.

"If it means more screen time for Sly, that's it case closed.

"They failed to understand that you have to let everyone else in in order to have a rounded story so that he can be believable. That's where that picture went wrong.

"A lot of the supporting roles weren't able to do their job and that's what I found really frustrating. I don't like wasting my time."

☆

is not blazing a new trail professionally with science fiction.

"I've always been a fan of the old Twilight Zone shows," he said. "Science fiction allows you to explore the human condition from a unique perspective."

He has written for such series as the Outer Limits and the X-Files — he scripted the first-season episode, Eve.

"Working on the X-Files was a pleasurable experience especially working with (Glen) Morgan and (James) Wong," Brancato said. "The series whetted my appetite for science fiction and working on the X-Files opened doors for me. It became a credit."

Since then the doors have indeed been opened.

Brancato has episodes of Beverly Hills 90210, Burke's Law and Robin's Hoods to his credit.

He has also penned the movie, Hoodlum, as well as the movies Thieves and Weathermen — the subject of his thesis at Brown University.

In his most recent complete effort, Species II, Brancato drew on one of his favorite movies for inspiration, The Manchurian Candidate.

But while the 35-year-old movie revolved around a man who was brainwashed into murdering the president of the United States and thereby a danger to America, Species II is the tale of a man who has his DNA altered and becomes a danger to the human race.

Even with two movie projects in the works, Brancato is focusing his full attention to the series. As a producer (along with Larry Sugar), Brancato has the opportunity to see his vision of the series become a reality. It's an opportunity that few writers have had.

"It's turning what's on the pages into reality, it's selecting the props, it's casting the actors. It's very exciting because your breathing life into what is really just a 48-page script."

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Oct. 2-4

Concept 98: Montreal; Hotel: N/A; Scheduled guests: Forrest J.Ackerman, Robert J. Sawyer, Mark Shainblum, Gabriel Morissette; Registration: $20 until March 31. Information: P.O. Box 405, Station H, Montreal, PQ, H3G 2L1.

Oct. 9-11

Maritime Science Fiction Festival: World Trade and Convention Centre, Halifax, N.S. Schduled guests: George Takei, Nigel Bennett, Bruce Campbell, D.C. Fontana. Registration: weekend pass $40, day pass $25 Saturday and $20 Sunday, children's day pass $10, other special rates available. Information: PO Box 46021, Halifax, N.S., B3K 5V8, toll free 1-800-622-6199 or (902) 454-5548; marfest@dbis.ns.ca or http://www.dbis.ns.ca/~marfest

Nov. 6-8, 1998

Primedia: Holiday Inn Toronto-Markham. Scheduled guest: Walter Koenig; Registration: $25 until March 15, $30 until Sept. 30, $40 at the door. Information: 1402-565 Avenue Rd., Toronto, Ont., M4V 2J9, (905) 820-3844 or http://www.interlog.com/~kcozens/primedia/

Nov. 21-22

ComicFreek '98: Toronto International Centre, Hall 6. Scheduled guest: g; Registration: $8 one-day pass, $12 two-day pass. Information: 422 North Rivermede Road, Unit 1, Concord, Ont. L4K 3R5, (905) 761-2185 or www.comicfreek.com

Jan. 9-10, 1999

Comicon II: Westin Harbour Castle, Toronto, Ont. Scheduled guests: TBA. Information: (416) 761-1760 or http://www.hobbystar.com/tocomicon.

July 9-11, 1999

Toronto Trek 13: Hotel: TBA. Scheduled guest: TBA; Registration: weekend pass $40 adult, $20 child. Information: (416) 410-8266; SASE Suite 0116, Box 187, 65 Front St., Toronto, Ont., M5J 1E6; tcon@icomm.ca, www.icomm.ca/tcon

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Our Contributors

Chato

Langguth

Humbert

Pallot

David Chato holds a BSc and comes from a career marketing high technology in fields from aerospace to biotechnology. He has been writing fiction for one year. In addition to Life After, he has two stories published in OnSpec (The PlayTime Case, Blind Date). The PlayTime Case is a 1998 Aurora finalist in the short story category.

Gary Langguth is a Saint John-based teacher who writes short fiction, poetry, and drama. His work has appeared in The Baltimore Review, The Malahat Review, The New Brunswick Reader, Valhalla Science Fiction and Fantasy and Writer's Block Magazine. Langguth currently serves as facilitator/contact person for the Saint John Writers' Group, president of the New Brunswick Writers' Federation, and English-language literary arts representative to the New Brunswick Arts Board.

David Humbert was born in Dundas, Ont., and studied religion and philosophy at McMaster University in Hamilton. He lives with his wife and two children in Sudbury, Ont., and teaches part-time at Laurentian University. He has completed his first novel, The Days of Time, a modern Grail fantasy, and is currently at work on a science fiction novel. Cyberlid is his first professional sale.

Terry Pallot is a professional artist based in Sudbury, Ont. He has worked for Malibu Comics, Marvel Comics and D.C. Comics. Since our first issue, he has been a frequent contributor to, and a constant supporter of Parsec.

Robert J. Pasternak is a renowned science fiction and fantasy artist whose work has appeared in numerous publications such as OnSpec. His work has also been displayed at numerous conventions. This is his second contribution to Parsec.

James Boutilier is a Nova Scotia-based freelance writer. He has been a frequent contributor to Parsec and is in the midst of conducting research for a book on prop-making.

Gregg Chamberlain has been Parsec's West Coast correspondent since 1995. He is based in Revelstoke, B.C., and is responsible for our coverage in Alberta and British Columbia.

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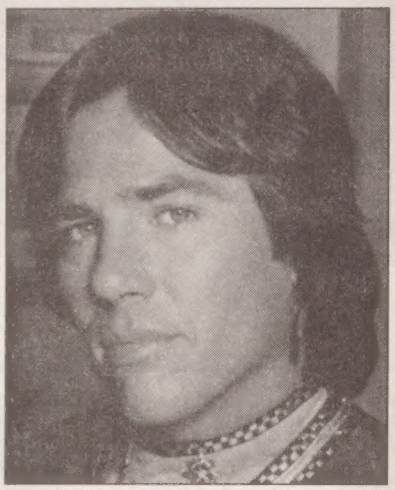

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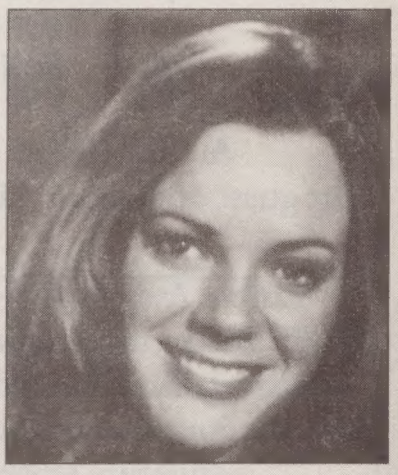

SOJOURN

Gerow Somerville

I know no beast that knows some touch of pity;
I have none and therefore am no beast. - Richard III -

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- Spinzone Magazine, Issue 17, November 1997

"...My opinion is this is a good game: rules are in no way new, but they are fast, easy to learn and QUICK, leaving space to role-play... The setting is an astounding mix of real world and science fiction, strange enough to challenge experts and comfortable enough to let newbies play easily... In conclusion, the game is well worth its price!"
- PC Action Magazine (Italy), RPG Column, March 1998 Issue.

"I think overall you have an excellent game here, and the others from this group all seem to agree... As an experienced gamer I am delighted that the game focuses a great deal of attention on role-playing, but when you get into combat hang on to your hat, 'cause it's one heck of a ride!"
- Bob Duchesneau (Player)

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